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The Spiritual Genius of St. Paul

THE SPIRITUAL GENIUS OF ST. PAUL

A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE RE-
INTERPRETATION OF HIS MESSAGE

BY

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"THE TEACHING OF JESUS," "THE CHRIST OF FAITH AND THE JESUS
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Preface

IN a volume published two years ago with the title "*The Faith of St. Paul: A Study of St. Paul as the Interpreter of Jesus*," I argued at some length that Paul was dependent upon Jesus for the spiritual experience in which his whole life as a Christian was rooted, and that his teaching is a faithful reproduction of that of Jesus. In carrying out that argument I found myself compelled to leave unnoticed, or to treat very cursorily, many of the great sayings in his letters in which his spiritual genius finds notable expression. The present volume goes some way towards remedying this omission. It presupposes the conclusions reached in the earlier volume and concentrates upon the exposition of such great sayings as give us Paul's answer to the question so widely and so keenly discussed to-day: What is Christianity? His answer to that question is of interest to a far wider circle than that of theologians and New Testament scholars. It offers, it seems to me, a very special help to earnest-minded men and women who are perplexed by one and another feature of current interpretations of Christianity, and who are feeling out for a re-interpretation which will be more in harmony with the mind of the Master.

There is one aspect of Paul's teaching which some

of my friends suggest I have not yet treated with adequate fullness—its bearing on theories of the Atonement. With that subject I hope to deal in a subsequent volume on *The Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

The epistles on which I have drawn in my exposition of Paul's spiritual genius are those which are now accepted as of direct Pauline authorship by a large number of experts in New Testament scholarship—1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians.

My quotations are usually made from the Revised Version. Occasionally Professor Moffatt's rendering is given.

To my friend Professor A. B. Macaulay, who has read the MS., I am indebted for several valuable suggestions.

D. M. Ross.

*Crieff,
Perthshire.*

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Introduction

THE old saying, *Pectus facit theologum*, is pre-eminently true of St. Paul. His spiritual experience gives us the clue to the interpretation of his outstanding place as a Christian thinker. It is at the root of his greatness as an ethical teacher. It explains how he could set forth the significance of Christ in such a way as to win a response to his appeal from the Gentiles. It is through a due appreciation of his spiritual experience we can most surely get an insight alike into his personality and into his message.

For an understanding of his spiritual experience as a Christian it is essential to have special regard to his spiritual experience as a Pharisee, for this has a very close connection with the extraordinary revolution in his life when God revealed His Son in him. His exceeding zeal in striving to render scrupulous obedience to the precepts of the Jewish law, written and oral, may have been exceptional. But what is much more significant is the unrest of heart by which he was sorely troubled in spite of all his blamelessness "as touching the righteousness which is in the law." Ethically sensitive, in an exceptional degree, he could be content with nothing less than such a goodness of heart as would give him victory over the evil self which was holding

his better self in galling bondage. Religiously sensitive also, in an exceptional degree, he longed for fellowship with a gracious God, but the evil self, which blocked the way to goodness, blocked the way at the same time to God. In his aspirations for a higher ethical and religious life mere obedience to the precepts of the Jewish law left him in the lurch. Its issue was the despairing cry: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?"

That cry was answered in the hour when it was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in him. His whole being was suddenly and amazingly flooded with an inrush of love. There was here a double-sided experience—an experience of the love of a gracious God, of God as revealed in Christ, and an experience of love like that of Christ which meant victory over the malign power of the evil self. This new double-sided experience was the abiding and dominant feature of his life as a Christian. That he owed it to Christ was his own unshakable conviction. The revelation of God's Son in him was mediated by his knowledge of the historical Jesus, by his knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus, and, above all, by his knowledge of the sufferings and death of Jesus. But, beyond that knowledge and crowning that knowledge, he was intensely conscious of the presence and working in his heart of the indwelling Christ, of the "Christ in me." The significance of his experience as a Christian is disclosed to us in his own words: "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in

the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me."

This spiritual experience which had come to him through Christ was the one big reality in his life. It was a constant spring of wonder and joy and thanksgiving. To use his own significant phrase, it had ushered him into a "new creation," a new world as we should say. It gave him a new ideal of goodness, a new understanding of God, a new outlook upon the world, a new interpretation of the purpose God was working out in the history of humanity. What he had himself experienced through Christ compelled him to be an ambassador of Christ to the Gentiles that they might become sharers of his own experience. In fulfilling that mission he could not avoid telling those whom he addressed what Christ had been to himself, and unfolding what was involved in such an experience.

We know little of Paul's oral addresses to the Gentiles. But, fortunately for the Christians of later ages, he had occasion again and again to write letters to the Christian communities in the Gentile world, in whose well-being he was specially interested. Letters, written for the express purpose of dealing with various practical problems emerging in these Christian communities, might not be a suitable vehicle for setting forth an outline of Christian theology, but they were an eminently suitable vehicle for the expression of Paul's spiritual experience. And what an extraordinary wealth of self-disclosure we have in his letters! Through these letters, as has been well said, we have a

fuller knowledge of the inner life of Paul than we have of the inner life of any other personality in the ancient world.

Paul had a singular gift for taking his correspondents into his confidence, a singular willingness to lay bare to them the inmost secrets of his heart. One has but to read the short letter to Philemon about his runaway slave, Onesimus, to discover how ready he was to open his heart to his fellow-Christians on the deepest levels of their common Christian experience. But, besides, there was one special reason why Paul spoke frankly about himself and about the deepest things in his life. For long years he had been bitterly attacked and often outrageously slandered by men who acknowledged Jesus as the Christ—Judaising Christians, who could not forgive him for teaching that Jesus was “the end of the law,” that Jesus had died to redeem both Gentiles and Jews from “the curse of the law.” In the interests of his mission as a preacher of Christ to the Gentiles he had to deal with ugly aspersions which were being made upon his character; and to deal with them the more effectively, he drew aside the veil from his inner life that his readers might the better know what kind of man he was to whom they owed their standing as Christians.

But whether Paul is speaking explicitly of himself or not, he cannot write many sentences without giving expression to his own spiritual experience. Here we find the abiding attractiveness of his letters. We are continually coming across pregnant sayings such as

these : " The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts " ; " God sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father " ; Nothing " shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord " ; " It is God which worketh in you both to will and to work " ; " The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death " ; " In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision ; but faith working through love " ; " Love is the fulfilling of the law " ; " Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is love " ; " Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me " ; " I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may know him . . . and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death." It is sayings such as these—and they are extraordinarily abundant—which are the big things in Paul's letters, the things which *find* us, the things which reveal to us what Christian experience may become, to what heights we may dare to aspire. It is in sayings such as these, in which he is disclosing the secret of the experience which has come to him through Christ, the spiritual genius of Paul is perennially impressive. As it is with sayings such as these we shall be chiefly concerned in this volume, we have chosen for its title *The Spiritual Genius of St. Paul*.

The sub-title of the volume may be briefly explained—

A contribution towards the reinterpretation of his message. Those who are somewhat prejudiced against Paul, and they are not few in these days, may be willing to acknowledge the epigrammatic terseness and abiding worth of many of his great sayings, but they complain that they are often embedded in the discussion of problems which may have been of pressing importance for those to whom his letters were written but have ceased to have any vital interest for the modern world; and they become impatient with one and another of his subtle, long drawn-out arguments which do not seem to be convincing. In addition to all this, here and there in his letters there are references to theological speculations, borrowed apparently from his rabbinical teachers, which have been made so much of in the exposition of his theological system as to suggest that they belong to the essence of his message. Further, Paul has often been regarded as chiefly responsible for theories of predestination and atonement by which the modern Christian mind is seriously perplexed. Whatever may be the explanation, Paul's real message has somehow come to be obscured. If we start in our study of his message with a consideration of the great sayings in which he is giving expression to the religious and ethical experience which has come to him through Christ, the mists which obscure his message may begin to lift. We may find that some theological theories for which he has been held responsible are irreconcilable with his fundamental Christian convictions. We may find that much that he has borrowed from the speculations with

which he was familiar as a Pharisee does not belong to the essence of his message. Especially may we find that, far from moving on a different plane from that of Jesus, he is the Christian thinker who has most deeply understood and most faithfully interpreted the mind of the Master.

No reader of Paul's letters can be in doubt about the strength of his emphasis upon the ethical interests of human life. That emphasis goes back to his pre-Christian days. As a Pharisee his ruling ambition was to be a good man. Even in those early days there was at work in his heart an ideal, dimly understood by himself it may have been, of a higher kind of goodness than he had been encouraged by his teachers to cherish. We may be sure that what he was in quest of was goodness for its own sake, not goodness as a mere means of securing other desirable things either in this world or in some future world. For him, goodness was in itself the supreme end to whose attainment he gave his whole heart and strength. He could have made his own the great saying of Immanuel Kant : " There is nothing in the world which can be termed absolutely and altogether good, a good will alone excepted."

It ought not to seem unduly strange that there should emerge in the environment of the later Judaism one who belonged to the strictest Jewish party, but who yet laid emphasis upon goodness for its own sake, and who cherished in his secret heart an ideal of goodness which outstripped currently accepted ideals. That it should

seem strange may be owing to the undue depreciation of the spiritual atmosphere in which Paul was reared. Before going on to consider the weaknesses of the Judaism in which his whole life as a Pharisee was involved, let us, then, first turn our attention to its worthier features.

The Judaism of Paul's day was the heir of noble ethical and religious traditions—traditions of the great story of the people of Israel; traditions of the lofty teaching of prophets like Amos and Hosea, like Isaiah and Jeremiah; traditions of the spiritual regeneration of the people under the hard discipline of the exile; traditions of the heroic struggle, from the time of Ezra to that of the Maccabees and onwards, to preserve the Jewish “treasures of morality and religion” against the malign influence of the Gentile civilisations by which the Jews found themselves encompassed in Palestine and in other lands. In the preservation of these ethical and religious traditions a great part was played from the third century B.C. by the synagogue. From the Old Testament we learn next to nothing about this new institution, but in the later Judaism it was a far more potent, and, let it be said, more beneficent influence than the Temple. In Paul's time wherever communities of Jews were to be found in the countries washed by the Mediterranean Sea, and in the countries lying to the east of Palestine, as well as in Palestine itself, there a synagogue was to be found. It was *the* bond of union for the Jewish people, dispersed as they now were in many lands to the West and East of their

ancestral home. In the synagogue the Jews met together to hearten each other in devotion to the God of their fathers and in loyal observance of the Law of their God. The living of a good and God-pleasing life was what the whole service of the synagogue looked towards. It centred in the reading of the Pentateuch, "the five books of Moses." There was a place for the reading of passages from other parts of the Old Testament Scriptures, for prayers, for addresses, and to some extent for congregational praise, but everything in the service had a direct bearing on inspiring the worshippers to live a good and God-pleasing life. The synagogue was the hearth of a serious and in many ways a noble discipline in individual, domestic and social morality; it was an ethical society, but an ethical society, with its roots fixed deep in religion.

Through what they came to know of the synagogue not a few of the Gentiles became interested in the Jewish faith of these strange neighbours of theirs. They might smile at their peculiar national customs, and at their attitude of aloofness towards their Gentile fellow-townsmen, but by and by they began to be attracted by their moral grit, by the purity of their domestic life, by the closeness of the bond between their religion and their morality—a bond often conspicuous by its absence amongst Gentile peoples—by their faith in a divine purpose working at the heart of the history of their people, and by the indomitable hope with which they looked forward to the future. Here and there Gentiles attached themselves to the synagogue, some

whole-heartedly ; but some more loosely, for the peculiar national customs of the Jews were a stumbling-block.

To the later Judaism the indebtedness of Christianity is greater than is sometimes acknowledged, or even recognised. Let that be borne in mind when we turn to the other side of the picture.

The less attractive features of the later Judaism have their root in the exaggerated legalism which had been strengthening its hold upon the Jewish people for more than two centuries before Paul's day.

In the written law of the Jews there were precepts which were the expression of high ethical ideals, but there were also many precepts which seem to us to belong to the sphere of civil law. The written law was much more than a manual of ethical and religious teaching ; it was also a law-book for the whole round of national life. In that fact there was involved the risk of goodness being too much identified with external obedience to statutory precepts. In later Judaism the tendency to identify goodness with external obedience to statutory precepts was intensified. To protect Jewish morality and religion against the invasion of alien and hostile influences, there was a continuous multiplication of additional statutory restrictions imposed upon the Jewish people under the authority of the scribes, and with the hearty approval of the party of strict Jews known as the Pharisees. These additional statutory restrictions, spoken of in the New Testament as " the traditions of the elders," came to be regarded as having a divine authority similar to that of the

written law. So the way was opened up for an increase of legalism in the interpretation of goodness. To be a good man it was reckoned necessary to render obedience to all the precepts of the law, oral as well as written. To fail in obedience to any of these precepts was to fail in loyalty to God, whose authority was behind them. Room might be left for distinctions between the more important and less important precepts, but no room was left for such a magnifying of the "weightier matters of the law" as would involve the disparagement of any one of the statutory precepts. The cause of God was bound up with the observance of all these statutory precepts.

If Paul had been an average Pharisee with no lofty ideal of goodness working secretly in his heart, he might have been content, as many of his fellow-Pharisees were, with a strict observance of the precepts of the law. Or, on the other hand, if he had taken up as free an attitude to the Jewish law as some of his countrymen, he might have escaped the inward conflict in which he became involved. But with his vision, dim as it may have been, of a goodness that was other and higher than that of external obedience to a system of precepts, and along with that vision a determination to find in strict obedience to these precepts the true way to be a good man, he was sure to have a sore experience of unrest of heart. This determination of his to attain to goodness by the way of legal obedience is an illustration of the overpowering hold which the legalistic ideal of goodness had in the Jewish circles

in which he had been brought up. It was not inevitable, it may be said, that he should have let this ideal overpower him. At all events, he did let it overpower him. There were "liberal" Jews in Alexandria and elsewhere who were disposed to magnify the treasures of morality and religion in their Jewish faith and to put little stress on what seemed to the Gentiles, amongst whom they were living, to be only strange and repellent national customs. Paul was no such "liberal" Jew. He was whole-heartedly bent on the scrupulous observance of the whole Jewish law as interpreted by the scribes. He says to the Galatians: "Ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion how . . . I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. i. 13, 14); and he tells the Philippians that "as touching the righteousness which is in the law" he was found "blameless." But in spite of all this zeal for the traditions of his fathers and all this blamelessness "as touching the righteousness which is in the law" there was a great unrest in his heart. Why this unrest? If he had been aiming at goodness of this kind for the sake of the reward it would bring him in honour and influence in the Jewish community, or for the sake of reward in some future world, he might well have been at ease. For an understanding of his unrest we must reach down to a deeper level. What he longed for was goodness for its own sake, not for any external reward it might bring him here or hereafter.

Nothing else would satisfy the aspiration of this profoundly ethical soul. He discovered that after all his strenuous and, as far as outsiders could judge, successful struggles to attain blamelessness "as touching the righteousness which is in the law," he had failed in his quest for goodness, for the kind of goodness the vision of which had laid its power upon him. He was painfully conscious of an evil self at work within, giving rise to evil impulses, evil tempers, lovelessness, hardness of heart. Here was the malign power which was thwarting him in his quest for goodness. Here was the secret of his unrest of heart.

In the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans Paul gives us his own account of this unrest of his. He is contrasting goodness interpreted as obedience to legal precepts—"the oldness of the letter"—with goodness interpreted as service in "newness of the spirit," such goodness, for example, as he extols in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. By way of illustration he refers to his own experience in his pre-Christian days. "I delight," he says, "in the law¹ of God after the inward man, but I see a different law (a different power, we might say) in my members"—the power of the evil self which thwarts him in his struggle to live up to what he knows to be the true ethical ideal. "The good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice." His

¹ It is necessary to keep in view that Paul uses the word "law" in a great variety of senses. Here the "law of God" is virtually what we should describe in our modern phraseology as the ethical ideal.

better self is entirely on the side of the divine ideal; his better self is not responsible for his failure. "It is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me"—the evil self which reduces his better self to impotence. Through the power of the evil self, he is "sold under sin," "brought into captivity." Here there is no help for him in greater zeal in rendering obedience to the legal precepts of the law; this only serves to make him more aware how far he is from true goodness. It seems to him that through the commandment his lack of goodness is actually increased,¹ that through the commandment sin becomes "exceeding sinful." All this is the outcome of the working of the evil self. And there seems no escape from the toils in which the evil self has entangled him. So there is wrung from his hot despairing heart the cry: O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the bondage of the evil self? Who shall appear as my redeemer? Who shall bring into my heart a spiritual power which will help me to the mastery over my evil self, and so help me to the attainment of that goodness without which there is no possibility of inward rest?

The story of Paul's spiritual conflict as told in this seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is concerned primarily with his ethical experience, but neither as a Pharisee, nor as a Christian, could he ever keep his

¹ We should say "the sense of his lack of goodness." Compare what Paul says (Gal. 3. 19) about the Jewish law having been given "because of transgressions," *i.e.* according to most modern scholars, "for the purpose of producing transgressions."

ethical and his religious experience apart. They were an indissoluble unity. His longing for a higher kind of goodness was at the same time a longing for a closer and warmer fellowship with God. The evil self that barred the way to goodness of heart barred the way to God the ideal and the inspirer of goodness. Under the working of the evil self he felt himself estranged from God, condemned by God the Watcher and the Judge. So in that cry of his for deliverance from his evil self, there was a cry to be at peace with God.¹

II The Revelation of God's Son in Paul

To be a good man was Paul's chief concern as a Pharisee. He was obsessed by the conviction that a good and God-pleasing life meant a strict observance of the Jewish law, oral as well as written. But at the same time his own experience under this law convinced him that without goodness of heart he could never be the good man he longed to be. So in spite of his exceptional blamelessness "as touching the righteousness which is in the law" he was reduced to despair in his quest for goodness. He was keenly sensitive to the malign power of his evil self. Strive as strenuously as he might to

¹ Jewish and other scholars complain that Paul has been far too depreciatory in his estimate of the spiritual worth of the Judaism in which he was reared. But what finer witness to its spiritual worth can there be than the emergence from the bosom of Judaism of a Pharisee like Paul, with the ethical vision and the ethical fervour, which we have had under consideration in the preceding pages? Surely Paul is himself a shining example of the promise and potency of the Judaism of his day.

render the strictest obedience to the precepts of the law, the evil self was ever at work, mocking his efforts to attain the higher kind of goodness, the vision of which was never far away. All his sore struggles along these lines issued in the cry : O wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from the tyranny of the evil self, the indwelling sin entrenched at the very centre of my being ?

In the years when Paul was experiencing the bitterness of the conflict between his better self and his evil self there appeared in Palestine One who was spoken of as the prophet of Nazareth, and whose message was stirring the hearts of many of his countrymen. In days long since past, before the scribes (or ecclesiastical lawyers) had succeeded in repressing the emergence of the prophetic spirit, prophets had ever and anon arisen to proclaim that what God demanded from His worshippers was righteousness of heart. Jesus the prophet of Nazareth was in the succession of divine messengers like Isaiah and Jeremiah. He was ever insisting on goodness springing from a good heart. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7. 18). He concentrated attention, not on the observance of legal precepts, but on the inner life, on what a man is in the heart of him. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," "Blessed are the pure in heart" (Matt. 5. 3, 8). So he was less concerned about the observance of rules than about the inspiration of love, and of love that rises to heroic heights. "Love your enemies and pray

for them that persecute you. . . . For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? . . . Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect " (Matt. 5. 44-48).

In the interests of His own ideal of goodness it was inevitable that Jesus should review and criticise conceptions current in circles familiar with Judaism as interpreted by the scribes. So long as every precept of the law, including "the traditions of the elders," was regarded as having the same divine sanction and authority behind it, and its observance as having equal importance in the sight of God, the supreme importance of goodness springing from the inspiration of love could not fail to be imperilled. So Jesus was forced to draw distinctions. When Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem and asked Jesus, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." He laid emphasis on the good heart as against the importance of the ritual cleansing of the hands: "Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which proceedeth out of the mouth defileth the man. . . . For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts. . . but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man." (Matt. 15. 1-20). With still sharper words did he challenge this magnifying of precepts about matters of minor importance at the expense of what was of cardinal importance: "Woe unto you,

scribes and Pharisees, for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgement, and mercy, and faith. . . . Ye blind guides which strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel " (Matt. 23. 23, 24). False conceptions of goodness were blocking the way to true goodness; they had therefore to be criticised and condemned. And Jesus went further than the criticism of the traditions of the elders. In the interests of His own higher ideal of goodness He extended His criticism to one and another precept of the written law.

Such free criticism of accepted ideals which had behind them the weight of the authority of many generations of the most pious of the Jews was a startling phenomenon in the Judaism of Paul's day. It was bound to stir up opposition in many quarters, especially among the party of strict Jews known as the Pharisees, the reason for whose existence was the maintenance and defence of the written law, and of the oral law as this had been formulated by successive generations of scribes. The criticism of the law by Jesus could not but appear to them to be a dangerous menace to their Jewish faith. The Pharisees, let us bear in mind, took for granted that the whole system of precepts as formulated in the Judaism of their day had been imposed by God upon the Jewish people, and that disregard of any of these precepts meant disregard of the authority of God. For them there could be no life truly pleasing to God, if any part of His expressed will was set at nought or made light of. The insistence by

Jesus upon goodness of heart was not in itself the reason for their attitude to Jesus : they too could leave room for that in its own place. The gravamen of the charge they brought against Jesus was that He insisted upon goodness of heart in such a way as to be only too likely to loosen the attachment of the people to this and the other part of the one divinely given system on which their Jewish faith was based. The Pharisees were, therefore, agreed that it was imperative upon them to defend against Jesus the Jewish law in its entirety. On this point they were agreed, though there may have been a difference in the motives by which they were actuated. Some of them may have been concerned about the possibility of the loss of various worldly advantages, if the old order was disturbed. Others, less selfish and more patriotic, may have feared lest, if attachment to the Jewish law were undermined by teaching like that of Jesus, the one great bond which held the Jewish people together would be loosened, if not fatally broken. Then there might be others, greatly interested in the treasures of religion and morality enshrined in their traditional Judaism, who may have feared lest the disturbance of the existing order might issue in a less or greater loss of the treasures of morality and religion themselves.

Whatever may have been their motives, the Pharisees as a class gave no such welcome to the prophet of Nazareth as was being increasingly accorded to Him by multitudes of the common people. From the beginning their suspicions were aroused. The more they

came to know of His teaching, and they knew a great deal, for they were watching Him closely and receiving reports from many different quarters, the more rapidly did their suspicions grow into resolute hostility. The ground of their hostility, let it be repeated, was the persistence of Jesus in so magnifying goodness springing from a good heart as to disparage the ideal of goodness with which they had identified themselves—strict obedience to the precepts of the whole Jewish law. The teaching of Jesus, they were convinced, and they were right in their conviction, was irreconcilable with the Jewish faith as they understood it. So they resolved that the career of the prophet of Nazareth must be brought to an end. By the Cross of Calvary they achieved their purpose, or seemed to themselves to have achieved it.¹

Of the sudden revolution in his life Paul gives his own account in these words : “ It was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son in me ” (Gal. i. 15, 16). For the understanding of what that revelation meant it is necessary to keep in view not only his previous unrest of heart, but also that Jesus was brought to the Cross by the Pharisees because of a radical contrariety between His ideal of goodness and theirs.

When Paul first comes before us, it is as the persecutor

¹ Jesus was brought to the Cross by the Pharisees, not because He claimed to be the Messiah, but because they believed Him to be a dangerous subverter of their Jewish law. It was, of course, an additional cause of offence that such a subverter of the law was being regarded by so many of the people as the promised Messiah.

of the followers of the crucified Jesus. That means that he is still dominated by the conviction that obedience to the precepts of the Jewish law, written and oral, is indispensable, if he is to be a good man. He is wholeheartedly with his fellow-Pharisees in their belief that the teaching of Jesus, if it is allowed to spread, would imperil the interests of the Jewish faith, and in their determination to put down the Teacher's followers, as they had put down, and put down once and for all as they mistakenly hoped, the Teacher Himself. That he became a persecutor, one of the leading persecutors of the followers of Jesus, makes it practically certain that by this time at least, if not even earlier, he knew a great deal about Jesus, about His teaching, about His long drawn-out conflict with the Pharisees, and about many other aspects of His life : his fellow-Pharisees in Jerusalem had abundant stores of information on which he could draw. It is inconceivable that a man like Paul could ever have consented to become an active persecutor, unless he had had full information about Jesus and what He stood for.

In carrying out the dread work of persecution, he had opportunities for coming to change his estimate of Jesus. Close contact with the followers of Jesus seems to have had in the long run a decisive influence upon him. He cannot well have been unmoved when he discovered what kind of men and women these followers of Jesus were. Their evident mastery of the evil self, their loving spirit, their peace of heart, their abounding joy, their unflinching courage and indomitable hope, their

conviction that the crucified Master was still present with them—all that may have stirred the question: What must Jesus have been to be the source of life like that? This fresh interest in the personality of Jesus would dispose him to give attention to what he learned from the followers of Jesus about their Master and, it may be, to put a different construction on one and another part of the report about Jesus he had received from his fellow-Pharisees. Anyhow a ferment seems to have been set up, and to have grown in force the longer the persecutor was in touch with his victims. He became aware that he was "kicking against the goad." What he had learned about the love of Jesus for His fellows and about the peace and joy of His followers came very close to the sore in his own heart. What if, after all, Jesus may have been in the right in his conflict with the Pharisees? That question he may have asked himself, but only to crush it down as an evil suggestion. But it lived on and worked, almost unconsciously it may have been. The persecutor was being prepared for his great hour.

It was in these circumstances that "it was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in him." We may explain how Paul was being prepared for the crisis, not only by his experience as a persecutor of the followers of Jesus, but by all his experiences in the past years. But go as far as we may in this direction, we have to acknowledge that there is something here that is inexplicable, something that is beyond the reach of any fathoming lines of ours. We find ourselves in

the presence of a mystery, the old and ever new unfathomable mystery of the soul and its God.

It is with what this revelation of God's Son in his heart meant for Paul we are chiefly concerned at present, and here we have helpful guidance from his letters. He was conscious that apart from any efforts of his at the moment God—and emphatically God in Christ—had suddenly come into his heart with an extraordinary rush of gracious power. His cry had been: O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this evil self? Who shall deliver me from this estrangement from God? That cry was answered when the love of God in Christ laid its power upon him. So he tells us in the epistle to the Romans (7. 24-25, 8. 1, 2). "Who shall deliver me? . . . I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. . . . There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. . . . The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin." He had been passionately longing for the incoming of some power which would beat down the malign power of the evil self, and now he found himself, in a way only to be accounted for by the power of the love of God at work in his heart, lifted into the sphere of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, inflamed with a love like that of Christ in whose fire the evil self was shrivelled up. He had been passionately longing to be "taken into the heart of God," and to his amazement God took the initiative, God shed abroad His love in his heart. Love like that of Christ as the true ideal of goodness and love of God for himself such

as had been manifested in Christ—these were an indissoluble unity. The experience of this double-sided love was what he had been dimly but fruitlessly reaching out towards in all the time of his unrest. Now he has attained the goal of his double-sided aspiration, not by works of his own, but through the grace of God, through the revelation of God's Son in him.¹

III

A New Creation

To describe the extraordinary change which the revelation of God's Son in him made in his whole outlook upon life, Paul uses a striking phrase, which seems to have been of his own coining—"a new creation." In the Authorised Version and in the text of the Revised Version the rendering of the Greek words is "a new creature," which fails to express the idea which was probably in Paul's mind. In the margin of the Revised Version, "a new creation" is the rendering. The phrase occurs twice in the epistles, and it is worth while to take special notice of the connection in which on each occasion it occurs.

¹ We learn from Paul's account of the great crisis in his life what he meant by *revelation*. It was not the communication to him by God of doctrinal truths, but a new and exceptional experience of God in Christ. Doctrinal statements might be needed to express to himself and to others what was involved in this experience, but the experience itself was the primary and most important thing. If he makes use of such doctrinal truths in his letters, he is not aiming at winning the assent of his readers to these truths, as if that were the main thing; he is making use of them to help his readers to enter more fully into his own experience of the revelation of God in Christ.

In the epistle to the Galatians Paul says: "Neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal. 6. 15). Here the phrase is used where he is contrasting the observance of the precepts of the Jewish law with the higher ideal of goodness which he owes to Christ. In Second Corinthians, after speaking in the fourth chapter of God "shining in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus" (2 Cor. 4. 6) he says in the fifth chapter: "If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new," and then goes on to speak of "God . . . in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5. 17-19). Here the phrase is used in connection with the manifestation of the love of God "in the face of Christ Jesus." We may therefore assume that the phrase has reference to what was at the heart of his initial experience as a Christian, and of all his subsequent experience—the inrush of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the power of love like that of Jesus, and the shedding abroad of the love of God in his heart.

Paul himself suggests to us that the story of the creation in Genesis was in his mind when he coined the phrase, "the new creation." "Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6). It is an arrestingly bold idea that the transformation of his outlook upon life, which was

effected by the revelation of God's Son in him, might be compared to the creation of the world.¹ But the transformation was so stupendous—passing from darkness into light, from bondage into freedom, from unrest into peace, from fear into confidence, from despair into hope—that to speak of it as “a new creation” did not seem to one who had experienced it to be a fantastic metaphor.

Finding himself in this “new creation” it was inevitable that Paul should be a “man of joy.” The author of the Book of Job said of the creation of the world that “the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38. 7). So it has been justly said of “the new creation” that we never cease to hear from Paul “the sound of singing.” A recent writer has ventured to speak of the pure message of Jesus taking on, in Paul, a “gloomy metaphysical tinge.”² St. Paul and gloom! Surely he is one of the most joyous Christians Christendom has seen. With his abiding experience of the love of God, and of a life inspired by love, how could he but

¹ A sentence of Dr. James Drummond may be appropriately quoted: “We must be content with noting the fact that entering the Kingdom of God implies, in the Christian view, the perception of a spiritual scene, as full of marvel, and beauty, and hope, as this material world when it reveals itself to the freshly-opened eyes and dawning intelligence of a child.” *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 161.

² “It seemed to Hugh a strange and bewildering thing that the pure message of simplicity and love, with its tender waiting upon God, its delight in flowers and hills, its love of great ideas, its rich poetry, its perfect art, had taken on the gloomy metaphysical tinge that St. Paul with all his genius had contrived to communicate to it.” A. C. Benson, *Beside Still Waters*, p. 95.

be "a man of joy"? For him, joy is a cardinal feature of any truly Christian life. "The Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy" (Rom. 14. 17). "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, etc." (Gal. 5. 22). Writing from his prison in Rome to the Philippians he says: "Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I will say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4. 4). To the Corinthians he speaks as if their standing as Christians were all one with their joy. "Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy" (2 Cor. 1. 24).

For "the new creation" in which he finds himself Paul has never done acknowledging to himself and to others what he owes to Christ, and not to a Christ of his own imagination or of apocalyptic fancy, but to Jesus of Nazareth through knowledge of whom in His life and teaching and Cross he was prepared for the revelation of God's Son in him.¹ His indebtedness to Christ is acknowledged in a very emphatic way in his account of his deliverance from the bondage of the evil self. Recall his account and notice especially how the reason for his thanksgiving comes in between the utterance of his cry for deliverance and the answer to his cry. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me. . . . I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord . . . There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For the law

¹ History knows nothing of any apocalyptic Christ to whom is attributed such features of spiritual character as would explain Paul's experience, in this revelation of God's Son in him, of the incoming into his life of a great tide of love.

of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death " (Rom. 7. 24, 25; 8. 1, 2). And in all the days that followed he was never weary of acknowledging that the presence and energising of the personality of Christ in his heart was an abiding factor, and the main factor, in his Christian experience. Notably in that great *confessio fidei* of his: " I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me " (Gal. 2. 20). His own personality was so mastered by the higher personality of Christ, the story of whose life and death was a story of amazing love, that he could describe the secret of his life as Christ's " being working in his own." That phrase of his own so constantly recurring in his letters, " Christ in me," would have been an appropriate motto for all his thinking and for all his activity.

It is taken for granted by those who give themselves to the study of Paul's teaching that it is necessary for a due understanding of it to go back to his experience in his conversion. But here we need to be clear about what that experience involved. We have the suggestion made that little more was involved than such an appearance of the risen Christ as brought him the assurance that the victor over death must be the Messiah, and that with that assurance as a starting-point he reached, by processes of reasoning carried on in Arabia and elsewhere, his convictions about the love of God manifested in the death of Christ, about

Christ being the end of the law, and about similar topics dealt with in his letters. Such a view of his experience in conversion seems much too narrow. He had more than a mere vision of the risen Christ, he had an experience of the risen Christ at work in his heart in the power of the spirit of love. He had no need of a process of reasoning to reach his convictions about the love of God for him, and about love as the true ideal of the good life. When God revealed His Son in him he had an immediate experience of that double-sided love. This immediate experience was what brought him into the "new creation" in which he found himself. It is this experience which is at the heart of all his thinking, and it is this experience which we shall have to keep constantly in view when we go on to consider these four selected aspects of his teaching :

- A. A New Ideal of the Good Life.
- B. A New Understanding of God.
- C. A New Outlook upon the World.
- D. The Vision of a New Humanity.

A. *A New Ideal of the Good Life*

A. A New Ideal of the Good Life

As an ethical teacher Paul owed much to the moral genius of his own people, and somewhat at least to what he had come to know of the teaching of the Stoic moralists. But his ethical ideal is the expression not so much of reflection on what he had learned from his teachers as of his own personal experience.

His epistles are not a manual of ethics. They are less than that and they are more. If some of the cardinal aspects of ethical life receive less attention than we could have wished, that does not mean that he was uninterested in them ; it may only mean that in letters written to deal with the particular circumstances of the Christian communities to which they were sent, there was no occasion for referring to certain topics. What we have in these letters are extraordinary flashes of insight into the very soul of any worthy ethical life, and it is with these flashes of insight we are concerned in the following seven chapters.

We shall find in these chapters that it was impossible for Paul to keep his ethical ideal apart from religion ; that for him goodness and God were an inseparable unity.

IV Two Ideals of Goodness Contrasted

WHAT is goodness? It was in connection with that question Paul had his experience of the revelation of God's Son in him. That question involved these

other questions : What is God? What is the meaning of the world, of human life, of the history of humanity? Paul's conception of goodness is, therefore, of the greatest importance for a due understanding of his interpretation of Christianity.

The form in which the question, What is goodness? was raised for Paul was this : Is goodness the observance of rules imposed from without, or is it the outcome of a spiritual impulse at work in the heart? For giving an exceptionally decisive answer Paul was qualified by his own exceptional experience.

In the Judaism in whose atmosphere Paul was brought up there was, as we have seen, an idea, if not universal at least prevalent and potent, that a good and God-pleasing life meant strict obedience to the whole system of the multitudinous precepts of the written law and of the traditions of the elders. Paul as a Pharisee had been held in the firm grip of this legalistic interpretation of goodness. But his success "as touching the righteousness which is in the law" had its issue in a deep unrest of heart. The more resolutely and successfully he strove to be righteous in this sense, the stronger and more disturbing became his conviction that in mere obedience to the precepts of the law there was no way of escape from the malign power of the evil self which was thwarting all his struggles to attain the goodness for which in the "inward man" he was ever sighing, and without which, endowed as he was with an exceptional ethical sensitiveness, he could never be at rest. Then came

that marvellous experience on the way to Damascus when God in Christ laid his gracious hold upon him ("apprehended" him) and suddenly flooded his heart with an inrush of love.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Paul draws out the contrast between the two ideals of goodness with incisive sharpness, and that again and again he presses it home. It is to this contrast he is giving expression in his great saying, so often quoted and so often misunderstood: "The letter (that is, mere obedience to the law as a system of statutory precepts) killeth, but the spirit (the spirit of Christ which is the spirit of love) giveth life" (2 Cor. 3. 6). When he says, "the letter killeth," he is going back upon his own painful experience. All his long and hard struggle to be a good man by a scrupulous observance of statutory precepts issued in a despair that crushed him, in a despair so terrible that he speaks of himself as suffering death. "The commandment (that is, the law) . . . I found to be unto death. Sin finding occasion, through the commandment, beguiled me, and by it slew me" (Rom. 7. 10, 11). When he says, "the spirit giveth life," he is going back upon his own experience of the revelation of God's Son in him, and upon his experience in all the after days. Through the incoming of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus he found the secret of that goodness, of that true life for which in his pre-Christian days he had been dimly but vainly feeling out.

Paul's impatience with the mere observance of

moral rules as the ethical ideal is thus easily explained. It is born of his enthusiasm for the new ideal of goodness which has come to him through Christ Jesus. He is convinced that the way to true goodness is being blocked by attachment to the ideal prevalent in Judaism; that the mere observance of moral rules is no guarantee for deliverance from that tyranny of the evil self, which renders the "inward man," the better self, impotent to rise whither it is being drawn.

Emphasis on the observance of rules, even of moral rules however excellent these may be in themselves, is a constant menace to the interests of the highest kind of goodness. Observance of rules may so readily spring from unworthy motives. Compliance with the accepted social standards of moral conduct may have its root in a desire to gain an ulterior end, in a desire, for example, to "get on in the world." But goodness, which is sought after for gaining an ulterior end and not for its own sake, though it may be spoken of as morality, is not real goodness. As a great modern philosopher has put it, "A good will is esteemed to be so, not by the effects which it produces, nor by its fitness for accomplishing any given end, but by its mere good volition; *i.e.* it is good in itself; and is therefore to be prized incomparably higher for its own sake, than anything whatsoever which can be produced at the call of appetite or inclination. Even if it should happen that, owing to an unhappy conjuncture of events, this good will were deprived of power to execute its benign intent, still this good

will . . . would like a diamond shine in itself and by virtue of its own lustre. Utility or uselessness would neither enhance nor prejudice this internal splendour : they resemble the setting of a gem, whereby the brilliant is more easily taken in the hand, and offered to the attention of those not otherwise judges, but which would not be required by any skilled lapidary to enable him to form his opinion of its worth.”¹

If goodness sought after, not as the end in itself, but as a means of gaining some other and lower end, is not real goodness, does not this also hold of “ virtue ” sought after “ for the sake of everlasting happiness ” ? The story of his struggle to be a good man, as told in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, does not suggest that this was the motive of Paul the Pharisee. He says nothing there about “ everlasting happiness.” What he was bent on was how to be a good man, how to win the “ good will,” here and now, whatever might be the consequences in this life or the next. When Paul’s conception of goodness in itself and for its own sake is thrust into the background, when the observance of moral rules is regarded chiefly as the indispensable means of escaping the everlasting penalties due to sin, and of securing everlasting happiness, it is inevitable that there should ensue a corruption of the Christian religion. Against such a dethronement of goodness for its own sake from its sovereign place a fitting protest is expressed in the mediæval story, to which I have referred else-

¹ Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Ethics*.

where, of the woman who, when she was asked what she was to do with the pan of fire she carried in her right hand and with the pitcher of water in her left hand, replied: "To burn up paradise and to quench the fires of hell, that men might be good for the love of God and goodness alone."

In his epistles it is of the *divergence* between the observance of moral rules and the true ideal of goodness Paul most often speaks. But he is not unmindful of the *affinity* between them. Obedience to moral rules may be helpful for the attainment of goodness of heart: that is evident enough in the training of children. Paul acknowledges this helpfulness of obedience to moral rules in his own case. Looking back on his own experience he compares the law to a steward who keeps his ward under discipline, with a view to the day when his ward will cease to be under tutelage as a minor, and enter, unhampered by the former restrictions upon his liberty, into full possession of his inheritance (Gal. 4. 1-5). It was by his discipline under that law he was prepared for something higher, for the incoming of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. So he himself tells us: "For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God"—rise into the newness of a love-inspired life—(Gal. 2. 19).

Moral rules have their place, but they fail in their true function, if they do not take us beyond themselves, if they are not disciplining us for growth in that goodness which wells up from a good heart. In his *Ode to Duty* Wordsworth recognises what we owe

to the "stern daughter of the voice of God," but he has a vision of a higher stage of attainment than obedience to the imperious call of the voice of duty.

"Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light
And joy its own security."

Observance of moral rules has been sometimes spoken of as "cold morality," and not without reason, for it may be in no vital connection with the deepest things in the soul of man. But goodness, interpreted as a good will, a love-inspired will, brings us into the very citadel of personality; it brings us face to face with God. So Paul's language suggests—"the *spirit* giveth life." The spirit of man is not here left out of account, but it is the spirit of man as backed up by the spirit of God, the ever active and indispensable ally of the better self. Where goodness is, there God is. When we are under the impelling power of the "good will," it is in a temple we find ourselves, in which we become aware of the presence of God. And, let it be added, it is through the presence of God in that temple we discover how great man is, how God-like; what sacredness there is in human life, what incomparable worth, what infinite significance.

V

Christ the End of the Law

IN the epistle to the Romans Paul sums up in a few pithy words his estimate of the two contrasted ideals of goodness we have had under consideration in the

preceding chapter: "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness (goodness) to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10. 4). What he means by Christ being the end of the law is that He has decisively rejected the observance of rules, with little or no emphasis on the motives from which such observance is dictated, as the ideal of goodness. It is sometimes assumed that Paul is here declaring that Christ has done away with the ceremonial parts of the Jewish law. But he goes much further than that. He means that Christ is the end of the mere observance of moral rules, however worthy these may be in themselves, as the ideal of goodness. He draws no distinction between the ceremonial and the moral precepts of the Jewish law. The observance of moral precepts, if the interests of the good heart are neglected, may block the way to true goodness as effectually as the observance of the ceremonial precepts. Christ is the end of the mere observance of any rules whatsoever as the ideal of the Christian life. That Christ is in this sense the end of the law is a conviction that belongs to the very heart of Paul's message; and in resolutely holding by and expressing this conviction the disciple is loyal to the mind of the Master.

The conflict of Jesus with the Pharisees turned upon the irreconcilability of two divergent ideals of goodness. Jesus laid the emphasis upon the good heart, the Pharisees upon the strict observance of all the precepts of the Jewish law. Early in His ministry Jesus became aware of the Pharisees' distrust of His

teaching, and by and by of their increasing hostility. In His later ministry He became aware of their settled purpose to get Him somehow put to death. He was aware, too, that His attitude to the Jewish law was at the root of their relentless opposition. But He was undaunted in treading the path marked out for Him by His Heavenly Father. Conscious of the risks involved, He faced with unbending will the storm which loyalty to His own ideal of goodness had raised. "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9. 51). In the Cross the conflict between the ideal of goodness cherished by the Pharisees and that cherished by Jesus reached its climax. The Cross threw into relief the incompatibility of the two ideals. The law put Jesus to death and the death of Jesus meant for His followers "the end of the law," the end of the observance of legal precepts as the ideal of goodness.

It is probable that the companions of Jesus in His ministry did not, at first at least, appreciate fully the significance of the fact that their Master was put to death on the Cross because of His attitude to the Jewish law. What is not probable is that after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the only thing that distinguished the companions of His ministry from other Jews was their conviction that the crucified Jesus was the Messiah. From the words of Jesus and from many an episode in His life they had been beginning at least to regard the observance of the Jewish law in a new light. They knew that what stirred up the hostility of the Pharisees was the atti-

tude of their Master to the law, and that His attitude to the law was the reason why the Pharisees brought Him to the Cross. Is it conceivable that in these circumstances their attitude to the law should have been similar to that of the non-Christian Jew? The emergence of a personality like Stephen amongst the early Christians indicates how inevitable it was in the long run that the new wine of the teaching of Jesus should burst the old wine-skins of the Jewish law, even if Paul had not subsequently appeared on the scene.

But it was Paul who brought out decisively the significance of the Cross, in which the whole teaching and life of Jesus were focussed, as "the end of the law."¹ It is worth noting how often he speaks of the Cross in connection with his disparagement of the observance of the Jewish law as the ideal of goodness. In the epistle to the Galatians he implies that "the offence of the Cross" would be done away, if his Gentile converts would yield to the persuasive appeals of the Judaising Christians, and consent to submit themselves to the yoke of the Jewish law (Gal. 5. 11). He tells them that "if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought" (Gal. 2. 21). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3. 13). In the closing verses of this epistle, in which he is sum-

¹ Other aspects of the significance of the Cross will be dealt with in later chapters.

ming up his whole argument for the absolute worth of Christ's ideal of the good life as against the Judaising Christians who were glorying in circumcision and in other similar requirements of the Jewish law, he says : " Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation " (Gal. 6. 14, 15).

When Paul uses this strong language about the law he is far enough from desiring to throw discredit on the religion of his fathers. He glories in belonging to a people with exceptionally great traditions. " What advantage then hath the Jew? . . . Much every way " (Rom. 3. 1, 2). He speaks of his kinsmen according to the flesh in these terms : " Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption (God's special choice of them as His own children), and the glory (God's presence with them), and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises " (Rom. 9. 3, 4). Even the law he regards as a gift of God; his grudge against the law is that it is being so handled by the Jews of his day as to be a menace to the interests of goodness as the outcome of a good heart. Here he is not out of harmony with his fellow-Christians. They, too, have learned from Jesus what true goodness is. They may cling to their old Jewish observances, but they do not treat them as essential in their Christian discipleship. They were ready, at least most of them, to welcome as true disciples of the one Master

Gentiles who did not take upon themselves the yoke of the Jewish law. On the other hand, Paul was ready to conform to Jewish customs, so long as their observance was not so construed as to imperil the interests of his new ideal of goodness. "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, (I became) as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law" (1 Cor. 9. 20).

Paul did, indeed, go further than Peter and James and John in his protest against the observance of old Jewish customs as essential to Christian discipleship. The energy he threw into this protest was due to his wider contact with the Gentile world. It is not improbable that as a Pharisee living in a Gentile community he was impressed by the fact that many Gentiles who were attracted by several features of the Jewish faith were deterred from heartily identifying themselves with the synagogue by the repellent national customs of the Jews. When God revealed His Son in him, he could not help taking up a new attitude towards the observance of these customs. He felt himself in that hour "discharged from the law" through the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." It seems that there and then the problem of the Gentile world presented itself to him in a new light. In giving the Galatians an account of the great crisis in his life he says: "When it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me . . . *that I might preach him among the Gentiles*" (Gal. 1. 15, 16). Ever after, he

connected his own experience of "discharge from the law" with the interests of the Gentile world. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we (Gentiles as well as Jews) might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3. 13, 14).

When we read Paul's impassioned words against the law, we have to bear in mind what he was fighting for. Judaising Christians were visiting the Christian communities which he had founded in Galatia and elsewhere, and were arguing that no one could be a true disciple of Jesus who did not observe the Jewish customs. Paul was sure that if that view were to prevail, not only would Gentiles be deterred from becoming Christians, but the very meaning of the Cross of Christ would be fatally obscured. Need we wonder that in this conflict he waxed hot, and that sometimes he did not stop to make such qualifications of his strong statements as he would himself have regarded as just, and in their own place as necessary. It was a great thing he was fighting for, nothing less than the interest of the Gentile world in Christ; and, as involved in this, nothing less than the ideal of goodness for which Jesus lived, and for which He went forward to the Cross.

It has to be conceded that, if it was a great thing for which Paul was arguing, some of the arguments he uses seem to us not only perplexing, but, even when they are understood, quite unconvincing. For

example, he says to the Romans : " The law came in beside, that the trespass might abound " (Rom. 5. 20) ; and to the Galatians : " It was added because of transgressions (that is, to produce transgressions) " (Gal. 3. 19). It may be true that in Paul's experience the law only served to make sin exceeding sinful, that is, to produce an increased sense of sinfulness, but surely Moses and other Jewish legislators would have been astonished if it had been suggested to them that they were promulgating their laws for the sake, not of restraining, but of actually producing transgressions. If we are troubled about some of Paul's arguments, we can leave them alone and suffer no great loss. But great will be our loss in these days, if we cease to let his lesson press itself home upon us that while doctrines and rites may minister to the interests of a good life, assent to doctrines and observance of rites can never be a substitute for the goodness set forth for us in the life and teaching and Cross of Jesus.

VI

*Love the Fulfilling of the Law*¹

FOR the modern reader of Paul's epistles it is fortunate that he so often uses a simple, universally intelligible word to express what he means by " the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." If " love " does not cover all that the latter phrase connotes, it throws a helpful light upon

¹ In this chapter I have borrowed largely from a long chapter in *The Faith of St. Paul* on the Supremacy of Love.

what he has in his mind when he uses it. He himself suggests how closely he connects love with the spirit. In the thirteenth verse of the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Galatians he exhorts his readers to serve one another by love, and then in the sixteenth verse repeats the exhortation in another form: "But I say, Walk by the spirit" (Gal. 5. 13, 16). In another epistle he speaks of "the love of the spirit," that is, the love which the spirit inspires (Rom. 15. 30). In yet another epistle he speaks of "love in the spirit" (Col. 1. 8).

When Paul says that love is the fulfilling of the law, it is plain that he uses the word "law" in a different sense from that in which he uses it when he says that "Christ is the end of the law." In the latter sense what he has in view is the ideal of goodness as obedience to the statutory precepts of the Jewish law. But he often uses the word as virtually equivalent to the ethical ideal. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7. 22); "that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Rom. 8. 4); "Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law" (Rom. 3. 31); "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6. 2); "not being without law to God, but under law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9. 21). It is this wider sense of the word Paul has in his mind when he speaks of love as the fulfilling of the law.

For Paul love is the supreme, all-embracing ethical

ideal. That is made abundantly clear in passage upon passage in his epistles.

In two of his epistles love is appraised as the fulfilling of the law (the ethical ideal). "Through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal. 5. 13, 14); "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law" (Rom. 13. 8-10). In the epistle to the Colossians there is an interesting phrase which suggests that for Paul everything that goes by the name of goodness or virtue gets a heightened worth when it is closely associated with love: "Put on, therefore . . . kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering . . . and above all these things put on love, which is *the bond of perfectness*" (Col. 3. 12-14).

It is, of course, in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians we have the fullest and noblest expression of his conviction that love is the ethical ideal. Here there is almost nothing that is perplexing for any reader. Throughout it is almost as simple in its language and luminous in its teaching as the Sermon on the Mount itself. May we not believe that in his oral addresses to the Christian communities he spoke far

oftener with the simplicity and terseness of this great hymn in praise of love than with the subtle and laborious argumentativeness of a pupil of the rabbis, which we find, for example, in the latter part of the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Galatians?

This noble outburst comes in quite incidentally in the course of Paul's handling of matters which were disturbing the peace and unity of the Christian community in Corinth. Troubles had arisen about the relative worth of various "spiritual" gifts, such as "speaking with tongues" (ecstatic and unintelligible utterances of exceptionally emotional worshippers) and "prophecy" (the gift of edifying the Christian community with inspired but intelligible speech). This and the other member of the community was pressing for larger opportunities for the exercise of his special gift in the meeting for common worship, and was showing lack of thoughtfulness about other members having opportunities for the exercise of their special gifts. So friction ensued; jealousies and heart-burnings were engendered. It was in view of such a situation, and with an eye also upon other matters with which he was dealing in other parts of the epistle, that Paul here broke away and concentrated the attention of his readers upon the supreme spiritual gift in which the true secret of concord and peace was to be found. "And a still more excellent way I show unto you"—the way of love. The intense fervour with which he sings the praise of the "more excellent way" suggests that he is here giving expression to a regnant

and abiding conviction; suggests, too, that the expression of this conviction has behind it innumerable talks to the Christian communities about the supremacy of love.

One or two out of many things in this chapter may be singled out for special notice.

Paul as a Pharisee had found that he was powerless in his quest for the good life, the vision of which, dim as it may have been, was ever haunting and disturbing him. His way was blocked by the overmastering power of the evil self. Then came his experience of the power of "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Through that power he gained the victory over the evil self; he could now do what in his inward man he longed to do, and refrain from doing what in his inward man he loathed. On the power of the spirit to oust the evil self we have an illumining commentary in what he says in this chapter about the power of love (verses 4-7). He has in view various impulses of the evil self—impatience, envy, jealousy, self-conceit, pride, selfishness, ill-temper and the rest of them. Love, he says, is the power that can cast them out of the heart. "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness (has no secret satisfaction when others go wrong), but rejoiceth with the truth (delights in whatever good is done by others), covereth all things (says little about the failings of others), believeth all things (has faith in

the better self of others), hopeth all things (expects the best from others), endureth all things (is patient with the annoyances and injuries inflicted by others).

What stands out prominently in this chapter is the strength of Paul's emphasis upon the absolute worth of love. There are elements in the spiritual life which have their worth in their own place but are not comparable in worth with love. Such is religious emotion expressing itself in articulate speech or in the inarticulate speech described as "speaking with tongues." "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." Such is the will-force, divorced from love, which enables a man to do extraordinary service to the poor, and to accomplish astounding feats of self-mastery and self-sacrifice. "And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Very noteworthy is Paul's assertion of the absolute worth of love in comparison with knowledge; and by knowledge he means here knowledge of divine things. "If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge . . . but have not love, I am nothing." It is a man of exceptional insight into divine things who thus drives home the lesson that "knowledge is the second, not the first." It is not because he has little interest in knowledge or has himself made meagre attainments in it, but because the worth of goodness seems to him so absolute.

Dominated by the conviction that love is of absolute

and eternal worth, he says further on in this chapter : " Love never faileth. But whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. . . . Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is love." Knowledge of divine things is of worth, but its worth is subordinate and temporary. It is a handmaid to minister to the interests of love. It is not the end, it is but the means to an end higher than itself. Love is what is of absolute and eternal worth. Than Paul there has been no more uncompromising opponent of that intellectualism in religion which would magnify the importance of knowledge at the expense of love.

For an understanding of Paul and Paulinism it is essential to keep his estimate of love in the foreground. If we let it slip into the background, we may easily enough go astray in the interpretation of his message and of the man himself.

VII

Faith Working Through Love

IN the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians Paul does not explicitly connect love with the presence and working of God in the heart. He takes that connection for granted. It would have been impossible for him to leave it out of account. When God revealed His Son in him he was conscious of the inrush upon him of a great flood of love. In that hour he was aware that he was being lifted beyond himself by a power

not his own, that there was One with him greater than himself, that God was at work in him, the God of love. That was an abiding feature of his experience as a Christian. To describe it, he coined a pregnant phrase—"faith working through love" (Gal. 5. 6). For a full understanding of what he says about love as the fulfilling of the ethical ideal that phrase deserves special attention.

Paul lives and moves and has his being in God, in God as revealed in Christ who loved him and gave Himself up for him. To yield himself to God in Christ pressing in upon heart and will—that is what he means by faith. He uses the word "faith" in several senses, but in its deepest sense, it is a whole-hearted response to the overture of God in Christ. As in that passage in Galatians in which he gives us his *confessio fidei*: "I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. . . . I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2. 19, 20).¹ Faith is that "fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 9), which means trustful, loyal love to his divine Friend; willingness to identify himself with the ideals of his divine Friend,

¹ Paul's confession of faith is reproduced with great simplicity in a verse of one of our well-known hymns:—

"Thus would I live: yet now
Not I, but He
In all his power and love
Henceforth alive in me."

to let himself be subdued and moulded by a Personality higher than his own. There are other phrases which help us to an understanding of what Paul means by faith; notably such phrases, continually recurring in his epistles, as "Christ in me," "I in Christ": to have faith is to be "in Christ."

In the light of this deepest sense in which he uses the word "faith," what he says about "faith working through love" becomes luminous. Such faith cannot but work through love. Love is not something which follows upon faith. It is coincident with faith. It belongs to the very essence of faith. Without love faith cannot *be*.

If faith means "faith working through love," it is not difficult to understand why Paul should so often and so passionately pit faith against "works." By "works" he means obedience to statutory precepts of the Jewish law. As a Pharisee he had striven hard to become a good man by the way of such obedience, with this as the result, that from the depths of his despair there rose the cry: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" When he was lifted into the new sphere of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, into fellowship with Christ, he found that at last he had been initiated into the secret of victory over the evil self, and thereby of becoming the kind of good man he longed to be. It was, therefore, from no indifference to ethical interests he so persistently exalted "faith" over "works," but precisely from his exceeding zeal for the furtherance of ethical interests. Faith he

believed to be the one way to a truly good life. So he says to the Philippians with reference to his attainments in obedience to the Jewish law: "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, *not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness of God by faith*" (Phil. 3. 7-9). And to the Christians in Rome he says: "But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested . . . even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 3. 21, 22). "Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works" (Rom. 9. 31, 32). "For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10. 3, 4). If faith had been interpreted by Paul as an intellectual assent to doctrinal truths, emphasis upon faith as against works might well have been regarded by James as imperilling ethical interests. But if faith is interpreted as "faith working through love," as union with Christ in heart and will, then, far from being a peril to ethical interests, faith is the supreme fosterer of works that are good in the highest

sense. As Luther puts it in an oft-quoted sentence : " From the point of view of faith we may not ask whether we ought to do good works, for they do themselves without asking."

If faith is interpreted as " faith working through love," light is thrown upon a difficulty by which some of his readers are perplexed. They find him saying in one place that a man is justified by faith, and assume that justification means acquittal at the day of the last judgment¹; while they find him saying in another place : " We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad " (2 Cor. 5. 10). Does that mean, they ask, that according to Paul God has somehow two different standards by which He estimates the worth of a man's life and fixes his eternal destiny? No, Paul has no thought of two standards for the estimate of a man's worth in the sight of God here or hereafter. It is true that faith is the standard by which a man's worth is estimated, but at the same time no single word of Paul suggests that the divine estimate of a man's life does not turn upon goodness or the lack of it. But where is the difficulty, if by faith he means " faith working through love " ?

Paul's conception of " faith working through love " has a very direct bearing upon a problem which is ever with us, the problem of the relations of morality and religion. Where religion, as so often happens, is sup-

¹ See p. 105.

posed to be centred in doctrines about God and Christ, in the fostering of spiritual emotion, or in the observance of religious rites, it is not unnatural that those who are concerned chiefly with the ethical interests of human life should be somewhat shy of religion in the form in which they have become familiar with it. On the other hand, if goodness, as so often happens, is supposed to be centred in the observance of moral rules, it is not unnatural that those who are concerned about the inner life of communion with God should be somewhat shy of the emphasis which is put upon mere ethical culture. Paul's conception of "faith working through love" leads to the assurance that there need be no conflict between the interests of morality and of religion; that morality and religion stand for one common interest; that morality has not come to its own till it springs from the presence and working of the spirit of God in heart and conscience, and that religion has not come to its own till union and communion with God in Christ has issued in an ethical life aglow with love.

VIII

The Fruit of the Spirit

PAUL conceives true goodness, not as the result of a restraint imposed from without, but as the outcome of an impulse at work within. "I will" takes the place of "thou shalt not." It is in the interests of the spontaneity of goodness that he is so insistent upon freedom from the law: the freedom he pleads for is freedom for the spiritual impulse to come by

its rights. He can never get away from the thought that true goodness has the character of inevitableness, that it cannot but spring forth. So he is fond of speaking of goodness as fruit, as something which comes into being as surely as fruit from a good tree. "The fruits of righteousness" (2 Cor. 9. 10; Phil. 1. 11) and "the fruit of the spirit" are two of his noteworthy phrases.

In the paragraph of the epistle to the Galatians, in which the phrase "the fruit of the spirit" occurs, Paul is warning his readers against the abuse of the freedom from the law with which Christ has set them free. "Use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh" (Gal. 5. 13). Freedom from the law goes hand in hand with "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," but the significance of this new impulse of the spirit is that it is the secret of victory over the impulses of the evil self, over "the works of the flesh." "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 1. 16). Life in the spirit issues, not in the lowering of the ethical ideal, but in its heightening. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control" (Gal. 5. 22, 23).

Paul links together the spirit and ethical life in the very closest way. In many of the Gentile cults with which his readers were familiar the possession of the worshippers by a divine spirit was a prominent feature,¹

¹ The Greek word from which we have our word *enthusiasm* means "being possessed by a god."

but the connection of this spirit with ethical life was often enough of the loosest kind. Paul, however, could never separate the one from the other. He could not think of the spirit apart from the deepening and strengthening of ethical life. Spirit meant for him the spirit of Christ inspiring an ethical life like that of Christ. And, let it be added, it did not mean a cold drab morality, it meant love, joy and peace. "Going into the cold, grey mist in which his duty lay" would not have been for Paul a fitting description of one who walks by the spirit.

The phrase he uses to describe the ethical outcome of life in the spirit is significant—the *fruit* of the spirit. We have here an echo of the teaching of Jesus.¹ "Beware of false prophets . . . by their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7. 15-18). "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Luke 6. 45). This conception of true goodness as the outcome of a good heart withdraws attention from external obedience to

¹ In His sayings recorded in the synoptic Gospels Jesus very rarely uses the word "spirit." Instead of "spirit" He speaks of a "good heart." This phrase throws light upon what Paul means by "spirit."

precepts towards the inner life. And it suggests that where the good heart is present, there is something inevitable about the resulting goodness in word and deed. So for Paul true goodness *cannot but* manifest itself, where the impulse of the spirit is at work; it is the inevitable fruit of the spirit.

That this is Paul's ideal of goodness is strikingly illustrated by the way in which, when he is appealing to his readers to rise to higher achievements in the good life, he uses the indicative mood where we should naturally expect him to give expression to his appeal in the imperative mood. Instead of exhorting them to become what they *ought to be*, he reminds them of what they *are*, of that inner life of theirs in which the impulse of the spirit is at work. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8. 9). "It is on what they already *are* he grounds his appeal to become what they *ought to be*. He takes for granted that they have a treasury of inward life on which they can draw; an inner self, inspired by the spirit of Christ, which is waiting for due expression. The indicative mood is really the imperative mood handled in a singularly persuasive way. This is its import: Become what you are. The good life means living out what is already there, the good fruit of the good tree, the expression in action of the Christ-inspired self. Let, then, what you *are* come to its rights by your becoming what you *ought to be*." ¹

¹ *The Faith of St. Paul*, p. 122.

Emphasis on the fruit of the spirit is one of the many ways in which Paul drives it home upon his readers that in their quest for goodness what they have ever to keep in view is the inner life controlled by the spirit of Christ. In our ordinary experience we recognise—do we not?—that the inner life is what counts in our estimate of goodness. We are not impressed by correctness of conduct, dictated by a mere desire to conform to conventional rules, in the same way as we are impressed by words and deeds which are manifestly the inevitable outgoing of a loving heart. Again, in the moral training of children their obedience to rules is a more or less important factor, but such obedience is not an end in itself, it is a means for quickening and strengthening the impulse of the good heart. The more obedience to rules can be safely dispensed with, so much the more does it fulfil its purpose. And for the young and the old alike it holds good that rules are being mishandled, if they are not ministering to the development of the inner life of the heart—love of all that is noble and good, the outgoing of a Christlike love in the home, and beyond the home. So, in his emphasis on the fruit of the spirit, what Paul is aiming at is to purify and strengthen that impulse of the spirit of Christ which has its source in the hidden depths of the heart.

Paul's way of speaking about goodness as the inevitable fruiting of the inner life might suggest that for moral progress there is no need for "a dead heave

of the will." That may be his ideal, but he is under no illusion as to the actual situation. He knows that there are impulses of the evil self ever warring against the impulse of the spirit, which have to be crushed back and beaten down. Life in the spirit, he knows, cannot *be*, without the forthputting of will-force. It comes not to moral slackers, but to those who are morally alert. The will-force, which as a Pharisee he had put forth in his struggle to be a good man, was not without its bearing on the experience of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus which came to him on the way to Damascus. And in all the after years it was through the exercise of exceptional will-force his growth in the life of the spirit was secured and added to. What an illustration of this will-force he gives us in the story of how he fought down the temptation to succumb to the love of ease! Judaising Christians had been insinuating to the members of the Christian community at Corinth that his main object in all that preaching of his was to make money. That his work as a preacher of Christ to the Corinthians might not be imperilled, he set himself to live down that slander. He resolved that he would take no money from the Corinthians, and that he would work at the loom for the supply of his necessary wants. His body might be worn-out by his manifold exertions and sufferings, but he stood up to it, like a boxer against his antagonist, and reduced it to submission. "So fight I, as not beating the air: but I bruise my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after

that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected " (1 Cor. 9. 26, 27).

Paul leaves his readers under no misunderstanding as to the will-force that is needed in the new life into which Christ has initiated them. " Watch ye," he says to the Corinthians, " stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong " (1 Cor. 16. 13). There is still a fight to be waged between the better self and the worse self. " For the flesh lusteth against the spirit; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would " (Gal. 5. 17). So he calls for a stout heart and a resolute will. " Mortify (make to die) the deeds of the body "—the impulses of the evil self (Rom. 8. 13). " Mortify (make dead) your members which are upon the earth "—these same impulses of the evil self (Col. 3. 5). But mere will-force is not his last word about the secret of victory in the moral struggle. In his pre-Christian days he had trusted to mere will-force, and it left him a defeated combatant. Not in mere will-force, but in the spirit of life in Christ he found the secret of victory over the impulses of the evil self. " Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh " (Gal. 5. 16).

IX

Putting on Christ

PAUL believes that he has found the ideal of goodness in Christ. It may, therefore, seem somewhat surprising that he so seldom in his letters makes explicit

reference to the words and deeds of the historical Jesus in which that ideal is set forth. Some students of Paulinism hazard, as the explanation, the suggestion that he had little knowledge of, and little interest in, the words and deeds of the historical Jesus. That explanation cannot well be the right one. It is not easily conceivable how a man like Paul could have brought himself to be a persecutor of the followers of Jesus, unless he had first learned a great deal about the life and teaching of their Master. Nor is it easily conceivable how without knowledge of, and interest in, the words and deeds of Jesus he could have found himself at home in the Christian society whose members lived and had their being in the atmosphere of reminiscences of the earthly life of Him whom they acknowledged as their Lord. Further, if Paul's ideal of goodness is in its essential features the same as that of Jesus, how did he come by it, if not through his knowledge of Jesus and of what Jesus was and taught? It is plain that it did not come to him from the Judaism in which he had been reared. Did it come to him from some imaginary conception of a heavenly Messiah portrayed by the writers of the widely known Jewish apocalypses? He was probably familiar with one and another of these Jewish apocalypses, but in no "apocalyptic Christ" could he have found anything approaching the ideal of goodness set forth in the words and deeds of Jesus. Nor could he have come by his ideal of goodness through what knowledge he had of Gentile philosophy and religion. The ideal "wise man" of

the Stoics lacked the most characteristic features of the ideal of Jesus and of Paul. As for the mystery religions, if Paul made use of one or two of their favourite phrases, it is certain that not from that quarter did he come by his ideal of goodness.

These ingenious and far-fetched explanations of the little explicit reference, made by Paul in his letters, to the details of the life and teaching of Jesus seem to be wide of the mark. A more satisfactory explanation may be arrived at by examining what he means by "putting on Christ."

Nowhere else in the New Testament than in Paul's epistles do we come across this exact phrase. The metaphor of "clothing" is often used in the Old Testament in connection with moral character, as in such instances as these: "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness" (Ps. 132. 9). "He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke" (Isa. 59. 17). "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my justice was as a robe and a diadem" (Job. 29. 14). Paul makes use of this familiar metaphor in exhorting the Colossians to cultivate a character worthy of Christians: "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave, so also do ye: and above all these things

put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3. 12-14). But elsewhere he gives an original and surprising turn to the metaphor. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13. 14). "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3. 27). Such a strange use of a familiar metaphor is worth meditating upon.

By "putting on Christ" Paul means being clothed with the character of Christ. But why this unusual way of giving expression to the thought that likeness to the character of Christ is what Christians are to aim at? The reason is not far to seek. We have seen in previous chapters how he is ever driving his readers back upon that inner life in which alone he finds the secret of true goodness, driving them back upon faith. It is in fellowship with God in Christ that the impulse and the power to rise to the heights of ethical life are to be found. So he appeals to his readers, not only to strive after likeness to the character of Christ, but to go deeper; to put on Christ, to maintain and strengthen their fellowship with Christ, to yield themselves to the transforming power of a Personality greater than their own. To put on Christ, then, is to be "in Christ," to live in union and communion with Him, and so to be one with Him in "vision and love and will."

From this point of view we can understand why Paul so seldom makes explicit reference to the ethical precepts of Jesus. Something more is demanded from the Christian than the acceptance and outward

observance of the precepts of the Master : the mere observance of His moral rules might have a taint of legalism similar to that by which the observance of the Jewish law was infected. What more is needed is the spirit of Christ present and at work in the heart. That is the safeguard against a new legalism. So, if Paul does not often quote the words of Jesus, he is insistent enough that he is no worthy Christian who is not continually striving to be more deeply entered into the spirit and mind of Christ, to be more completely " clothed " with Christ.

What has just been said about the words of Jesus applies in a somewhat similar way to the example of Jesus. Paul speaks only once or twice of the imitation of Christ, and rarely, if ever, does he refer to any *definite deed* in the life of Jesus as an example to be copied by His disciples. If this is surprising, it may also be instructive. The mere copying of some definite thing which Jesus did does not rise to the height of Paul's conception of the ideal of goodness. Apart altogether from the fact that the vocation of Jesus was in many respects on a different and higher plane than that of His disciples, the copying of the example of Jesus might, after all, savour too much of something that is mechanical, of something that does not spring from the depths of the heart. Paul forces us back upon the inner life of fellowship with Christ which begets the impulse to be as faithful to the demands which our particular vocation demands as Jesus was faithful to the demands which His unique

vocation made upon Him. As Dr. Hort has put it, "As the Way, Christ is meant to transform us: but the transformation is not into the fashion of Jesus of Nazareth, but into a fashion shaped out of our own materials." ¹

The "putting on of Christ" may, therefore, deepen the sense of individual responsibility, may stimulate the individual to make the most of whatever gifts and powers and opportunities are at his command. That feature of Christian discipleship is set forth by Paul in these few words of his: "I, yet not I" (Gal. 2. 20). It was through his abiding fellowship with a greater Personality than his own that his individuality got its chance of being drawn out and enriched. The more he was Christ's man, so much the more was he the true Paul. The more his own self came under the transforming power of his divine Friend, so much the more did he grow into a stronger and nobler selfhood. We have but to make ourselves familiar with his life-story and with the revelation of himself in his letters to understand what the "putting on of Christ" may mean for helping the individual, in that service to God which is service to his brother man, to be himself, to trust himself, at love's bidding to assert himself.

X

Fellowship with Christ in His sufferings

IN this chapter we single out for consideration one special aspect of the life and teaching of Jesus, which

¹ *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, p. 205.

has an exceptionally commanding place in Paul's ideal of goodness.

Jesus said to his disciples : " Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? do not even the Gentiles the same ? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect " (Matt. 5. 44-48). Great love, heroic love that matches itself against suffering and hatred and malice, shines forth from the whole life of Jesus amongst His fellows. It rises to its supreme height in His death. It is unique, self-sacrificing love which gives its significance to the Cross of Calvary.

Jesus let His disciples understand that they were to be sharers in the love by which His own sufferings and death were inspired. After He had told the Twelve at Cæsarea Philippi that " the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed," He went on to say : " If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me : For whosoever would save his life shall lose it " (Mark 8. 31-35). Still later, when the forecast of His death was on the eve of its fulfilment, the two sons of Zebedee with their thoughtless ambitious request gave

Jesus a further opportunity of declaring that loyal discipleship meant sharing in the love-inspired sufferings of the Master. "Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask? Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We are able. And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized" (Mark 10. 38, 39).

Here Paul is a faithful interpreter of the mind of Jesus. If he seldom refers to incidents in the life of Jesus, to His sufferings and death he is constantly referring, and with unmistakable warmth of feeling. There may have been early Christians who were perplexed by the apparent scandal of the crucifixion of the Messiah, and who were fain to get some theory which would tone down the scandal. Paul had no need of any such theory. The fact of the love which shone forth from the Cross of Jesus so laid its power upon him that ingenious theories were not called for. This love was for him the greatest thing in earth or in heaven. On the one hand, it was the supreme manifestation of what God is,¹ and on the other hand, it was the supreme manifestation of what man may be.

To be mastered by the power of a love like that by which Jesus was inspired in His sufferings and death is what Paul means by Christian discipleship. In disclosing to the Galatians the secret of his own life he

¹ This aspect of the love of Jesus manifested in the Cross is considered in Chapter XII.

says that he is "crucified with Christ," and indicates what this crucifixion with Christ means in these words : "Christ liveth in me : and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith (in fellowship with Christ), the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2. 20). In dealing in the epistle to the Romans with the suggestion that if the grace of God abounds there is less need for anxiety about a worthy Christian life, he reminds his readers that by their baptism at the very beginning of their Christian discipleship they were committed to the new life of love manifested by the suffering and crucified Jesus. "Are ye ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? . . . we have become united with him by the likeness of his death" (Rom. 6. 3, 5).

As a disciple of the crucified Jesus, it was Paul's ambition to be a sharer in the sufferings of his Master. "I count all things but loss," he says to the Philippians, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may know him . . . and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death" (Phil. 3. 8-10). To the Corinthians he says : "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves ; we are pressed on every side, yet not straitened ; perplexed, yet not unto despair ; pursued, yet not forsaken ; smitten down, yet not destroyed ; always bearing about in the body the dying (putting to death) of Jesus, that the life also of

Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh " (2 Cor. 4. 7-11).

Sharing in the sufferings of Jesus meant, of course, for Paul sharing in the love of which His sufferings and death were the crowning expression. This Christ-like love was his ideal of goodness. It was the impulse of his life-work as an apostle of Christ to the Gentiles : " The love of Christ constraineth us " (2 Cor. 5. 14). It was the secret of his endurance, of his joy in the endurance, of the sufferings of which he had abundant experience; and the secret, let it be added, of the extraordinary influence he exercised upon various kinds of people in the Gentile world.

Paul does not look upon love like that of the suffering and crucified Jesus as merely an ideal for himself and other exceptional Christians; he looks upon it as the ideal for every Christian. It was by the love of God reaching him through the suffering and crucified Jesus he was captured when God revealed His Son in him, and never afterwards could he rest in anything lower than Christ-like love as the ideal of goodness. This is the explanation of his singular impatience with mere obedience to the precepts of the Jewish law as the ideal. He is determined to let no such lower ideal obscure the sovereignty of love like that of the suffering and crucified Jesus. It is significant that in his polemic against Judaising Christians who insisted upon imposing the Jewish law upon Gentile converts he refers so often

to the sufferings and Cross of Jesus. In the epistle to the Galatians, written for the express purpose of combating this demand of Judaizing Christians, he says : " I through the law am dead to the law . . . I have been crucified with Christ " (Gal. 2. 19, 20). " Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation " (Gal. 6. 14, 15). It is in warning the Philippians against possible intrigues of Judaizing Christians that he tells them that what attainments he had formerly made " as touching the righteousness which is in the law " he now counts not gain, but loss for Christ ; that now it is his one aim to attain " the righteousness which is through faith in Christ," to " know the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death " (Phil. 3. 2-10).

It was in connection with his criticism of the legalistic ideal of obedience to the Jewish law that Paul was so insistent upon the commanding place of fellowship with Christ's sufferings in the Christian ideal of goodness. Obedience to the Jewish law is not within the sphere of our interest, but we are not immune from the perils of a new legalism. It is possible for Christians to be content with the acceptance of doctrines about God and Christ, with the observance of religious rites, and with more or less obedience to the moral precepts of Jesus, and at the same time to make little effort to let their lives be mastered by the love by which the sufferings of Christ were inspired. That this falls far

short of the true ideal of the Christian life we are reminded by Paul in what he says about the meaning of our chief religious rite, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It is the communion of the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10. 16); it is communion with the Lord as crucified; it is fellowship with the sufferings of Christ; it is sharing in the love which is set forth by the sacramental bread and wine. This is Paul's ideal of goodness for the Christian. And in love rising ever nearer to the height of the love of the suffering and crucified Christ is the true source of spiritual power for the individual Christian and for the Christian Society.

B. *A New Understanding of God*

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There are two different starting points, related indeed to each other, for the conception of God. In the one case we start from contemplation on what we find in the universe as a whole, and then relate the conclusions we have arrived at along that line to the God of conscience, the God of ethical experience. In the other case we start with God as revealed in ethical experience, and then, in the light of the conception of God we have arrived at along that line, go on to interpret the universe as a whole.

Paul's starting point is ethical experience. For that reason we have considered his new ideal of the good life before proceeding to the study of his new understanding of God. His conception of the God of ethical experience colours everything he has to say about God.

XI

Experience of the Love of God

PAUL as a Pharisee must have been familiar with the many passages in the Old Testament in which great stress is laid on the goodness of God, the loving-kindness of God, the mercy of God. It is more than probable that in the synagogue he had heard words such as these in the prayers: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God and the God of our fathers . . . who bestowest gracious favours." "Thou art good, for Thy mercies fail not, and compassionate, for Thy loving-kindness

never ceaseth; our hopes are for ever in Thee.”¹ But it seems clear that even with such helps at his command the thought of the love of God had taken no firm hold of him: he had let himself be too completely entangled in the toils of legalism. God was, of course, conceived by him as a righteous God, but as a righteous God who was above all a legislator and judge. In such a conception of God Paul could not be at rest. His longing for a more intimate fellowship with God than he had yet attained made that impossible.

Further, he was familiar, at least by the time he became a persecutor of the followers of Jesus, with the teaching of their Master. He may have known more or less fully what emphasis Jesus laid upon the love of God “who maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust”; he may have known that Jesus was accustomed to speak of God as Father. In contact with the followers of Jesus he could hardly avoid noticing, and being impressed by, their serene confidence and abounding joy, suggestive of their assurance that in all their sufferings they felt themselves encompassed and upheld by an Unseen Love.

A certain familiarity with the thought of the love of God, which may have come to Paul from various quarters, can well have been a preparation for the revelation of God's Son in him. But in that hour it

¹ From the *Shemoneh Esreh*, a synagogue prayer which was probably in existence in one form or another in Paul's day.

was far more than a new thought about the love of God which came to him; it was a new experience of the love of God, which was intertwined with his experience of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The love of God was "shed abroad in his heart" (Rom. 5. 5). This sense of being flooded by the love of God was a constant factor in his life ever after. In *Grace Abounding* Bunyan tells us of a great day when there came to him a vivid sense of the love of God. "I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God, that I remember I could not tell how to contain till I got home. I could have spoken of his love and of his mercy to me even to the very crows that sat upon the fields before me, had they been capable to have understood me. But alas," so Bunyan sorrowfully confesses, "within less than forty days I began to question all again; which made me begin to question all still." With Paul there was no subsequent questioning of the love of God which had been shed abroad in his heart. Nothing could ever separate him from "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8. 39).

If Paul's initial experience as a Christian meant the sudden, inexplicable shedding abroad in his heart of the love of God, it is natural that he should never cease to acknowledge the grace of God, and not any "work" of his own, as the source of his new life. As a Pharisee he had struggled with extraordinary resoluteness to attain goodness and acceptance with God by obedience to the precepts of the Jewish law. Now he has dis-

covered that God has been beforehand with him; that God has taken the initiative, has not waited for him to climb up to Him, but has stooped down to him; that all along God has been very close to him, pressing in upon him, had he but known it, to bring him into fellowship with Himself and give him the victory over his evil self. His own experience of the love of God was the source of his unwavering conviction that the God with whom he was confronted in the moral struggle, the God of conscience, was more than legislator and judge; that He was the Lover of men, their Helper and Heartener.

With such a conception of God it was natural that Paul, like Jesus, should so often speak of God as Father. That he is here leaning upon Jesus is indicated by the fact that in two separate epistles he introduces the Aramaic word for father, which Jesus used in prayer, and which seems on that account to have had a special significance for the early Christians. "Ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8. 15). "God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4. 6). That Paul is here leaning upon Jesus is indicated also by his phrase, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Such a phrase suggests that he interpreted the Fatherhood of God in the light of the teaching of Jesus and in the light also of that unique intimacy of fellowship with God in which Jesus lived out His own life.

God can be called Father in the general sense that the Creator is governing all things for the good of men, and watching over them with a kindly providential care. But that is not the primary or deepest meaning of the Fatherhood of God for Paul. What he means by it is to be interpreted in the light of his experience of the fatherly love of God in the sphere of conscience. As a Pharisee he had had experience of God as a Personality other and greater than himself, of whose reality he was as sure as of his own, and whose rightful authority over him he could not but acknowledge. But this Personality greater than his own he conceived as a stern lawgiver and judge. When the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, he discovered that he had been misunderstanding the character of the God who confronted him in conscience; he discovered that the God speaking to him in conscience was a God of love, fatherly and heartening love; he discovered that the "stern voice of God" heard there was the voice of the God and Father of Jesus. His assurance of the reality of the Fatherhood of God was not the result of a process of reasoning, it was rooted immovably in his own individual ethical experience.

God as Father present and at work in conscience was conceived by Paul as ever pressing in upon the individual with the insistency of a tireless love; pressing in upon him to bring him to a close fellowship with Himself and to active sympathy with His ideals; and

to help and hearten him to make a willing response to the divine overture.

Where this response is made, there the life of sonship is present. Sonship is involved in the experience of the love of God. It means trust and confidence and joy. It means the banishment of fear : " Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear ; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father " (Rom. 8. 15). It means being at home with God, as children with their father, no longer unwilling bond-servants oppressed by the sense of subjection to the hard rules of a hard task-master : " When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. . . . God sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bond-servant, but a son ; and if a son, then an heir through God " (Gal. 4. 4-7).

If the sense of sonship means freedom and joy and hope, it involves also great responsibilities. God as Father is working out a great purpose with His children. He is ever striving that they may be drawn into sympathy with His ideals of what they may make of their life ; that they may become (in the phraseology of Jesus) " perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect." Sonship leaves no room for moral slackness. In sonship there is no easing of the stringency of the imperious demands of conscience. On the contrary, there is a

heightening of the ethical ideal, there is an intensified appeal for loyalty to the ethical ideal set forth in the Father's love.

In Paul's teaching about the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of man we are taken out of the atmosphere of the law-court into that of the home, which alone is in keeping with his own experience as a Christian. It is therefore inevitable that he should be resolute and uncompromising in his antagonism to any legalistic interpretation of the Christian religion.

XII The Love of God and the sufferings and Death of Jesus

PAUL cannot think of the love of God apart from Christ. The love of God which was shed abroad in his heart was mediated to him through Christ, not, as we have already said, through some Christ of apocalyptic fancy, but through the Christ who had lived in Palestine as a man amongst men. We need not hesitate to believe that he was conversant, more fully conversant perhaps than we are to-day, with incidents in the life of Jesus from which His great love for His fellows shone forth. It is true that he does not often refer to such incidents in his epistles: he could take for granted that his readers were more or less familiar with them. But every reader of his epistles must have noticed that, however little he may refer to incidents in the ministry of Jesus till near its end, he is continually referring to

His last sufferings and death. There he finds the climax of His life; there he sees the supreme manifestation of the love by which His whole life was inspired. He cannot get away from the thought of His sufferings and death; from the thought of the love which nerved Him to confront the relentless hostility of His implacable enemies, not only with courage, but even with a stern joy; which nerved Him to tread the *via dolorosa* which led to Calvary. The Cross was the measure of that love. So Jesus could not but be for Paul "Christ crucified." In the Cross Jesus had risen to the height of His love for His fellows; to the height of His love for Paul himself. "Who loved *me*, and gave himself up for *me*" (Gal. 2. 20).

If Paul cannot think of God apart from Christ, as little can he think of God apart from the sufferings and death of Jesus. There he feels himself in touch, not only with the love of Jesus, but with the love of God. The Cross of Christ and the love of God are for ever inseparable. "God commendeth his own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8).

In an earlier chapter¹ we spoke of Paul finding the supreme ideal of the good life in the suffering, self-sacrificing love of Jesus. Here we have the counterpart of that: this love of Jesus is the supreme disclosure of the love of God. There is a great passage in

¹ Chapter XI.

the epistle to the Philippians in which Paul expresses his conviction that in the sufferings and death of Jesus we are in touch with God, with God who in love stoops and suffers "for us men and our salvation." This is Professor Moffatt's rendering of the passage: "Treat one another with the same spirit as you experience in Christ Jesus. Though he was divine by nature, he did not snatch at equality with God but emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant; born in human guise and appearing in human form, he humbly stooped in his obedience even to die, and to die upon the Cross" (Phil. 2. 5-8). It is a difficult passage for us to-day, for we are not familiar with some of the underlying forms of thought. Leaving on one side the thorny problems which it has raised for theologians, let us try to get at the central thought to which Paul is here giving expression. By making use of conceptions borrowed, it may be, from speculations current in the apocalyptic literature of later Judaism and from other sources, he is reminding his readers that the self-emptying, self-sacrificing love of Jesus, who humbled himself even unto the death of the Cross, is the self-emptying, self-sacrificing love of God Himself. We have only to look at the connection in which this great thought is expressed to see that he is not here setting himself to instruct his readers in true doctrines about the person of Christ: he is appealing to them to cultivate a Christlike life, which will be in harmony with what God Himself is. In the previous verses he

has been appealing to the Philippians to be zealous in cultivating a spirit of love and lowliness in their relations with one another. "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." Then he backs up this appeal by reminding them of the great thought with which probably enough he had made them familiar in his personal talks with them. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God . . . emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being found in the likeness of men . . . who humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross" (the rendering of the Revised Version).

The particular form in which Paul has expressed the thought that the self-emptying, self-sacrificing love of Jesus is the love of God Himself has given rise to more theological discussion than almost any other passage in his epistles. The discussion, indeed, of the meaning of this and the other phrase has been so laborious that, instead of illumining the thought Paul is trying to express, it has often tended to let it become obscured. But whatever may be said about the interpretation of the phraseology in which it is expressed, the thought itself is for Paul of quite fundamental

importance. It is in the Cross of Jesus he reads the heart and will of God.¹ But this deep significance of Paul's great thought is sometimes missed. Christ, it is of course acknowledged, is a gift to men from the God of love, but it is not always equally acknowledged that the love of God is the self-emptying, self-sacrificing love which is manifested in the Cross of Christ. The suffering love of Jesus is sometimes conceived more as a divinely devised means of making it possible for the love of God to come into operation than as the suffering love of God Himself. That is not Paul's interpretation of the Cross. A modern philosopher seems to get closer to the mind of Paul, when he says of God that He "lives in the perpetual giving of himself . . . shares the life of his finite creatures, bearing in and with them the whole burden of their finitude, their sinful wanderings and sorrows, and the suffering without which they cannot be made perfect."²

The obscuring of the thought that in the sufferings

¹ Compare the words of Browning in *The Ring and the Book*, X. 1348, 1367.

"There is . . . a tale of Thee (God)
In the world's mouth, which I find credible :
I love it with my heart.

What lacks, then, of perfection fit for God
But just the instance which this tale supplies
Of love without a limit? So is strength,
So is intelligence : let love be so,
Unlimited in its self-sacrifice,
Then is the tale true, and God shows complete."

² Professor Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, p. 411.

and death of Jesus we are in touch with what is deepest in the heart and will of God has had unhappy consequences. There has been a tendency to think of Jesus as in closer sympathy with men than God, more tender, more gracious, more lovable—with the result that there seemed to be practically for the Christian two Gods, God the Father and Jesus the Son of God. The obscuring of the thought that it is God Himself with whom we are in touch in the Cross, in the tenderness, sympathy, lowliness and love disclosed in the whole life of the Cross-bearer, has had a singular result in the Roman Catholic Church. In the Middle Ages, when Jesus was too often conceived less as the loving Saviour than as the majestic inflexible Judge, men and especially women were fain to turn to Mary the mother of Jesus, not the Mary of history of whom we have little knowledge, but Mary idealised, invested with the gracious, tender, winsome features of character which they had ceased to associate with God the Father or with Jesus conceived as a stern Judge. Such aberrations as these in the Christian Church show how easy it has been to fall away from Paul's great thought that the God with whom Christians have to do is God who has disclosed Himself in the wideness and tenderness of the love which was at the heart of the life and death of the Cross-bearer.

GOD with whom we are confronted in conscience is God whose suffering and self-sacrificing love for His estranged children has been revealed in the life and Cross of Jesus. They may be estranged from Him and fear Him, because conscience makes them aware that by their resistance to the divine voice that speaks within they are rebels against God, enemies of God; and because they do not understand what God is, by whose august authority they are confronted in conscience. But God cannot leave His estranged children to themselves. His love for them makes that impossible. His love for them compels Him to stoop to them, to take upon Himself the burden of their evil plight, to bear with them and plead with them, if by any means He may break down their estrangement and bring them back to Himself. His reconciling passion never ceases to be at work with them.

One of the most illumining commentaries on this Pauline conception of the reconciling passion of God is to be found in a short poem by a modern writer who had deep spiritual insight as well as exuberant imagination. In *The Hound of Heaven* Francis Thompson pictures the insistent love with which God pursues his estranged child till at last He breaks down his resisting will and wins a response to His love.

The estranged child is the speaker in the poem.

" I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

[I fled]

From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
' All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.' "

Then follows a description of the speaker's search for some satisfying good other than God. After one fruitless search he hears the Voice saying,

" Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

After another fruitless search he hears the Voice saying,

" Lo ! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me."

At last his resisting will is broken down,

" Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke !
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee."

Then at the close of the poem the Voice of the Hound of Heaven, which is " round him like a bursting sea," is heard,

“ Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art !
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me ?

• • • • •
Rise, clasp My hand, and come.

• • • • •
Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest !
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.”

In presence of Jesus Paul can be visited by no doubt about the reconciling passion of God as the ultimate reality in His dealings with His estranged children. The life of Jesus is one long story of love's reconciling passion. “ The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost ” (Luke 19. 10). Love compels Him to be continually seeking to find the lost children and bring them back to their Father. The strength of His reconciling passion brings Him into conflict with the scribes and Pharisees. When they murmured, saying, “ This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them ” (15. 2), He spoke three parables to make it plain to them how inevitable it was that He should seek and save the lost. But scribes and Pharisees were obsessed by the conviction that the way in which He was fulfilling His mission to seek and to save the lost was a deadly peril to the sacred interests of the Jewish law. Nothing that He said in self-defence availed to allay their suspicions. Suspicion hardened into hostility which became more and ever more intense. Knowing what the dread issue of this

hostility might be for Himself, the fire of His reconciling passion only burned the more intensely in His heart. Steadfastly He went forward towards the Cross, determined to leave nothing undone that love could do to bring back estranged children to His Father and theirs, and assured that the Cross, by which He was confronted, would do more even than His life to achieve love's unquenchable purpose.

It was from the Cross of Jesus and the love which was at the heart of it that Paul got his understanding of the reconciling passion of God. He could never think of the reconciling love of God apart from the Cross. So reconciliation is indissolubly associated with Christ. "God reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5. 18). "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5. 19). "We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son" (Rom. 5. 10).

The phrase "the reconciling passion of God" is, of course, not a phrase used by Paul, but it may not be altogether inadequate to set forth how he understands what is the heart and will of God towards His estranged children. God is ever besetting them with His reconciling love. They do not need to "work" to win His love. It is waiting for them, it is pressing in upon them. Nowhere does Paul throw out the least hint that God has to be reconciled to His estranged children.¹ It is God who takes the first step towards reconciliation,

¹ This is now pretty generally acknowledged by Pauline scholars.

not the estranged children. It is the unmerited reconciling love of God, manifested in the Cross of Christ, which is not only at the very beginning of their reconciliation with God, but is the power working upon their heart and will which brings it about. All that God looks for from them is a decisive response to His reconciling love. With that response God and His estranged child *are* reconciled.

Such a reconciliation is at the heart of Christian experience and of the whole round of Christian duty. It means that the estranged child is now at home with God; that he is assured of forgiveness, and of forgiveness which is no mere remission of penalty, but a present experience of forgiving love; that he lives henceforth a life of fellowship with his Father in the atmosphere of trust and peace and joy. But it means much more than all that; it means a fixed resolve to let his Father's ideals of what he should be and do as His son mould his whole life; it means that he identifies himself with the great purposes his Father is carrying out in the world, and sets himself as a loyal son to be his Father's fellow-worker.

In reconciliation, as conceived by Paul, there is no ignoring of ethical interests, either on the part of God or on the part of man. Not on the part of God. What God in His reconciling love is aiming at is to deliver His estranged children from all their sinful ways and bring them under the sway of His own ideals of what a son should be. Nor on the part of

man. The reconciled child is decisively committed to a new ethical life, for there can be no reconciliation where there is no loyal acceptance of the ethical ideals of his Father.

Reconciliation is one of Paul's great watchwords.¹ He speaks of himself as a minister of reconciliation, as an ambassador of Christ through whom God is reconciling the world to Himself, as one to whom has been committed for his life-work the message of reconciliation. He is not content to bring those whom he addresses to accept the teaching of Christ. He insists upon taking them down into the deep places of the soul, that they may be face to face with, and come to terms with, the reconciling love of God in Christ, and so learn in fellowship with the Teacher the secret of power to be loyal to His teaching.

"Be ye reconciled to God"—that was the burden of his message to the Gentiles. Their observance of the Jewish law was not involved in their reconciliation with God. To yield themselves to the reconciling love of God revealed in the sufferings of the crucified Jesus, which, as he reminds the Galatians, had been "placarded" before their eyes (Gal. 3. 1), and to order their lives according to the ideals set forth in the teaching and life of Jesus—that was the gist of Paul's appeal to the Gentiles, and what he asked from them was faith, a whole-hearted response to the overture of the reconciling God.

¹ See at the end of this chapter a special note on justification.

Note on Justification

Justification is not so rich a word as reconciliation; not so well fitted to express what was in Paul's mind when he spoke of the reconciling love of God. It is significant that with one exception (1 Cor. 6. 11) he only makes use of it when he has in view Judaising Christians or Jews, who were given to interpreting God's relations to man with the help of forensic categories appropriate for a law-court. In the Judaism with which Paul was familiar it was the prevalent belief that obedience to the Jewish law would be the ground of acceptance with God in the day of divine judgment at the inauguration of the "new age." Perfect obedience was not to be hoped for; room was left for the pardoning mercy of God. But a certain measure of obedience was indispensable. If the test were passed, God would declare the individual "justified," taken into His favour and rewarded with the many blessings He had in store for those who had won His favour by obedience to His law.

Paul had this Jewish belief in view when he was arguing against Jews and Judaising Christians. He met them where he found them. He took up their own familiar word "justification," but in the way in which he used it he completely transformed its meaning and brought it into line with his own favourite word "reconciliation." For Paul the "new age" had already come; it was definitely inaugurated by the

life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Through the response of the individual to the reconciling love of God (that is, through faith), acceptance with God, justification by God was a present experience. And justification as a present experience was not the divine reward for obedience to the law, whether perfect or imperfect. The God of reconciling love justified the ungodly; He gave them here and now the assurance that they had been taken into the heart of their Father by whose reconciling love they had been captured.

Justification, as thus interpreted, takes us out of the atmosphere of the law-court into that of the home. But in view of the fact that Paul's use of the word was due to the special circumstances to which we have referred, and in view of the additional fact that the prevalent use of the category of justification in theology has often tended to foster legalistic conceptions of the relations between God and man, might it not be wise to make more copious use of the Pauline category of reconciliation with its atmosphere of the life of the home, where we are in close touch with the habitual teaching of Jesus about the Fatherhood of God?

XIV

Predestination

IF there is one thing more than another which has created a prejudice against St. Paul, it is what is supposed to be his teaching about predestination. It is

therefore worth while to consider what he does say about predestination, even though this should involve us to some extent in theological discussion.¹

Paul, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, lays emphasis on the reconciling passion of God. This is due to his own experience of the love of God. He has discovered that in the moral struggle God has been beforehand with him, that in that sphere the love of God has been the supreme reality, pressing in upon him with love's persistency, never ceasing in its passionate pursuit of him till it wins the response for which it is ever waiting. That is how he interprets the relation of God to man. Behind every man's life, at the heart of every man's life, God's purpose of love is ever at work. This is the deepest meaning of all the varied events and experiences of his life. Everywhere and always this purposive love of God is at work. It is at work in the discipline of life, in its joyous activities, in its struggles and sufferings. It is at work in the appeal that comes to a man on behalf of goodness and God from parents and teachers, from friends and all by whose words and lives his best self is drawn out and strengthened. Especially is it at work in the appeal that comes to him from the life and words and sufferings of the crucified Jesus.

In the light of this conception of the purposive love of God we get the clue to the understanding of what Paul means by predestination. The most important

¹ See note at the end of this chapter on Romans, chapters ix.-xi.

passage in which he makes use of the word is in the latter part of the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. He is there heartening his readers for a courageous dealing with the many difficulties and trials with which they are confronted. "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" That is the connection in which, in the immediately preceding verses, he speaks of predestination. "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained (in the A.V. did predestinate) to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Let it be noted what it is according to Paul to which they are predestinated. Not to everlasting happiness in the future world, but to likeness to Christ here and now. For Paul predestination means the loving purpose of God to fashion His estranged children into the likeness of Christ.

Predestination, as thus interpreted, is a well-spring of heartening in the Christian life; it is a perennial *sursum cor*. The thought of the persistent love-purpose of God with us is a stimulus to fresh courage and to redoubled effort. If we are disheartened by our weaknesses and failures, cowed by our heartaches and sufferings, if we are tempted to give up the struggle

to be loyal to Christ, there is rallying power in the assurance of the predestinating love of God. God is on our side, working with us and for us. His purpose of love to fashion us into the likeness of Christ abides, and can never cease to work through all our disheartening experiences. "He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1. 6).

It is God's purpose, His eternal purpose, to conform all His estranged children to the image of His Son. Paul knows that this purpose of God can be frustrated. It is being continually frustrated. It is frustrated wherever the voice of God in conscience is resisted. In a special sense it is frustrated when the claim for loyalty to Christ and His ideals is rejected. That man can set his own will in opposition to the will of God and His purpose of love may be a mystery, but it is a fact. Paul recognises all that, but he never falters in his conviction that the purposive love of God is the ultimate, the eternal reality in God's relations with man. Now and again he throws out hints which suggest that he is not eager to set limits to the victories which this purposive love of God may yet achieve.

Paul's experience of the love of God is at the root of what he says about predestination. But there are theories of predestination into which there enters another factor than that of personal spiritual experience. This other factor is contributed by speculations about the created universe. Here God is postulated as the

explanation of the multiplicity of the phenomena of the universe. From this point of view, God is conceived as Almighty Creator, and especially as Sovereign Ruler whose power over all things is absolute. This conception of God may be, indeed cannot well help being, combined with the conception of God as the God of conscience. As to the result of this, much depends on which of these conceptions we start with and make regulative, the God of conscience or the God postulated as the explanation of the universe. In the doctrine of predestination, which has given rise to serious misgivings amongst earnest-minded men and women, the conception of God as the postulate for a rational explanation of the universe has been so magnified as to give less than its due place to religious and ethical experience as a source of our knowledge of God. This doctrine of predestination asserts the absolute sovereignty of God in such a way as to override the testimony of conscience, and of this testimony we are surer than of speculations about the universe. The absolute sovereignty of God is difficult to reconcile with our conviction that we have been endowed with a will which we can, and often do, set in opposition to the will of God; and difficult to reconcile with the existence of moral evil in the world, without a shadow being cast upon the character of God.

But it is in connection with the absolute sovereignty of God in relation to the eternal destiny of men that this doctrine has called forth the loudest protests.

How are we to explain, so it is asked from the point of view of this doctrine, why the eternal destiny of one class of persons is different from that of another class, why some persons are destined to everlasting life and the others are destined to everlasting death? In the answer to this question the freewill of man is not left altogether out of account, but the ultimate explanation of this difference in destiny is found in the absolute sovereignty of God. "By the decree of God some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished." The one class of persons are the elect, the other the non-elect.

Predestination, thus conceived, has been for many persons no source of heartening as Paul's conception has been. It has robbed them of the assurance of the love of God for all His estranged children. It has cast a dark shadow upon the character of God. It has been a source of torment for many sensitive souls. Engrossment with the question: But am I of the number of the elect? has made life a long misery for them.

It is strange that Paul should have been made the chief sponsor for this theory of predestination. The passage in the epistle to the Romans which is chiefly drawn upon to saddle him with such responsibility

has been sorely misinterpreted. This theory of predestination forms no part of his teaching. On the contrary, it is in glaring conflict with his most cherished convictions.

In his thoughts of the relation of God to the human race and to the universe Paul does not start from speculations about the absolute omnipotence and sovereignty of God; he starts from his own personal experience of the love of God revealed in the life and teaching and sufferings of Jesus. It is in the light of that love he interprets everything in the relations of God to the human race and to the universe. So he is mastered by the conviction that what God is aiming at with His estranged children is that they may be reconciled with Himself and be conformed to the image of His Son. Is it, then, conceivable that the idea ever entered his mind that God purposed from all eternity to bring some of His estranged children into conformity with Christ, and that he purposed from all eternity to make no effort to bring the rest of them into conformity with Christ, that he purposed (to use the theological phrase) to "pass them by"? Had such a suggestion been made in his hearing, would he not in utter amazement have broken out with his passionate protest, God forbid! God forbid!

Note on Romans IX.-XI:

For the right understanding of these chapters three preliminary remarks may be made.

1. The word "predestination" is not used here, nor any synonym for predestination. This word seldom occurs in Paul's epistles, and where it does occur its meaning is in harmony with what he says about predestination to be conformed to the image of God's Son. (1 Cor. 2. 7. Cf. Eph. 1. 5, 11.)

2. This passage does not deal with the question of the destiny of men in the future world; it is confined to the consideration of a problem created by a definite set of circumstances in the present world.

3. The passage magnifies, not the narrowness, but the wideness of God's mercy, His mercy for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. "That he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!"

In these chapters Paul is giving his answer to a serious objection which was being increasingly put forward by the Jews against the new religious movement of which Jesus was the founder. The promise of the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom, they urged, was made to the Jews. The Jews, with few exceptions, did not at the beginning acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, and in the years that followed their attitude towards Him became harder and harder. It was Gentiles for the most part who were followers of Jesus. How then could Jesus be the fulfiller of God's promise to their fathers, if it was Gentiles and not Jews who were increasingly predominant in the Christian Society?

The answer to that objection seems to us obvious. The Jews, that is, the majority of them, were not open-hearted enough to appreciate the religious and ethical ideals of Jesus, whereas such open-heartedness was manifested by an ever-growing number of Gentiles. That is virtually Paul's answer, expressed in his own phraseology. "The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because, doing it not by faith, but as it were by works, they stumbled at the stone of stumbling" (Rom. 9. 30-32). That is, the Jews themselves must bear the responsibility for so few of their number, in comparison with the Gentiles, being found in the Society of the followers of Jesus.

Strange, however, it may have sometimes seemed to Paul, a Jew who gloried in his Jewish heritage, that only a "remnant" of his own people had become Christians. How he interpreted that strange fact from its Godward side may be gathered from what he says about the earlier history of the Jewish people in reply to the Jewish objections with which he is here dealing. Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, was chosen by God to be the bearer of His gracious promise. Of Abraham's children Isaac was chosen to be the bearer of the promise, and of Isaac's children, Jacob. In still later times a part of the Jewish people, not the whole, was chosen to be the bearer of the

promise. "Isaiah crieth concerning Israel, If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the *remnant* that shall be saved."

Why God should choose one people or one part of a people for special privilege and special service is suggested by a favourite Jewish illustration from the work of the potter: "Has the potter no right to make out of the same lump one vessel for a noble purpose, and another for a menial?" (M.) Peoples and individuals are, as an indisputable fact, endowed with special gifts and special opportunities, which must be traced back to the will of God. How these gifts and opportunities are to be turned to account for special service depends on the due discharge of their responsibility by those who have received them. But this illustration gives no countenance to the idea that God predestinates some men and angels to everlasting destruction. The potter may make a vessel for a menial purpose; he makes no vessel that he may simply destroy it; if he reduces it again to a lump of clay, it is only that he may remake it and make it more beautiful.

There are some things, however, in Paul's arguments against the Jewish objectors which give us pause, especially these words: "So then he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. 9. 18). The first part of the sentence is a summing up of what has been said in preceding verses about the free unmerited love of God. "For he saith

to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Here we are in the atmosphere of Paul's teaching about the grace of God, but the last part of the sentence, "and whom he will he hardeneth," is a hard saying. If he had said that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart by God, spoken of in Exodus, had been effected by God as the inevitable result of his evil conduct, that would have been in line with what he says in the first chapter of the epistle about further moral deterioration being the divinely inflicted penalty of sin (Rom. i. 24, 26, 28); and in line with the saying of Æschylus, "When a man is hastening to his ruin, the gods help him on." But Paul's words go further than that; they seem to attribute the responsibility for Pharaoh's evil heart to God. Upholders of the traditional doctrine of predestination lean heavily upon the words "Whom he will he hardeneth." But, when these words are taken in the sense naturally suggested by the context in which we find them, it is something else than the predestination of sinners to everlasting death which they assert; it is the responsibility of God for man's sin. That is an intolerable thought, even though it be the apostle Paul who gives, or at any rate seems to give, expression to it. It bears the mark of the argumentative subtlety of the pupil of Gamaliel. In any case, it is an intolerable thought for Paul himself. He drops

it long before he has done with his answer to the Jewish objectors. It is not God who is responsible for the hardness of heart which led to the rejection by the Jews of the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah promised to the fathers; it was the Jews themselves who were responsible. "Whom he will he hardeneth"—that assertion was far less an expression of Paul's real mind about man's responsibility for his own sin than a momentary slip of the subtle controversialist.

XV

God the Ally of the Better Self

"MAN cannot be good without being pious; man cannot be good without God"—that old saying is a terse acknowledgment of the two intertwining factors in the moral struggle. How to conceive aright the relation of these two factors to each other has been a problem for Christian thinkers, and for other thinkers, too, in all the ages. The solution of the problem has been often attempted by an undue magnifying of the one factor at the expense of the other. The sovereignty of the grace of God has been so stressed as to leave little room for man's responsibility in the exercise of his own free-will, or man's part in the moral struggle has been so stressed as to leave little room for God and His gracious working upon man's heart and will. So we have had endless controversy. Augustinians have been ranged against Pelagians, Calvinists against Arminians.

Paul gets to the heart of this age-long problem, and offers a solution as satisfying and as true to religious and ethical experience as we can well hope for. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work" (Phil. 2. 12, 13).

What he means here by salvation is fairly obvious from the connection in which he makes this appeal. He has been urging the Philippians to strive to have the mind which was in Christ Jesus, "doing nothing through faction or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." Then the appeal to work out their own salvation is followed up by further suggestions about striving to have the mind which was in Christ Jesus. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation." Paul, of course, does not here or elsewhere give the slightest hint that his readers must work out their own salvation, in the sense that they must "work" in order to merit forgiveness and acceptance with God: that is of grace, not of works. Nor is he thinking, at least primarily, of the bestowal of eternal blessedness in the future world. That belongs indeed to his idea of completed salvation, but he is here thinking of salvation as something which is to be realised here and now. To be

saved is to be delivered from all that is irreconcilable with a Christ-like life; to be saved is to have the mind which was in Christ Jesus. It is in this sense that Paul appeals to the Philippians to work out their own salvation. And it is for their encouragement to respond to such an appeal that he reminds them that God is working in them "both to will and to work."

The phrase Paul here uses in speaking of God is suggestive—"God that worketh in you." Of the reality of God the Dweller Within, of the God of ethical experience who is "closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," there is no room for doubt. As Newman puts it: "If I am asked why I believe in God, I answer that it is because I believe in myself, for I feel that it is impossible to believe in my own existence (and of that fact I am quite sure) without believing also in the existence of Him, who lives as a Personal, All-seeing, All-judging Being in my Conscience."¹ The God of conscience is not reached by proofs addressed to the intellect; He is experienced. The voice of conscience *is* the voice of God. In conscience we *know* that we are confronted with One, who is above us, who claims to have authority over us, and the justice of whose claim we acknowledge, however we may treat it. In the words of a modern writer: "This and none other is the meeting place of the soul and God, the moment of fusion between the *I am* that is within and the (greater) I am that is beyond—beyond,

¹ *Apologia*, p. 198, ed. 1875.

because we know it as exceeding the soul's capacity, and apprehend it immediately as infinite." ¹ It is in conscience we realise that God and our better self are somehow intertwined with each other, that God and our better self are on one and the same side against our worse self and all its evil impulses.

Conscience, as it is at any given moment, does not necessarily utter the last word on the range of the ethical ideal. The light that is in us may be obscure, and it belongs to us as persons under moral discipline to be ever striving that conscience may become more and ever more enlightened. Whether we recognise it or not, the God of conscience is ever pressing in upon us to raise us to higher conceptions of what we may be and do as His children. He makes His appeal to us through all His varied and sometimes strange dealings with us. He appeals to us through the influences which are at work upon us in the home; through the friends by whose lives we feel ourselves rebuked for our selfish ways; through all that we come to know of what has been nobly thought and nobly done in past generations and amongst all sorts and conditions of men, and especially of what has been heroically suffered at the bidding of the inward voice. Above all, God appeals to us through the love which shines forth from the life, the teaching and the sufferings of Jesus. So Paul discovered that the Cross of Jesus was the supreme enlightener of conscience. As a

¹ I. Middleton Murry, *The Necessity of Art*, p. 142.

Pharisee he had been exceedingly zealous to be loyal to the voice of God in conscience. As a Christian he gained a new understanding of this voice of God in conscience. It was no longer the voice of a mere divine lawgiver demanding obedience to the precepts of the Jewish law; it was the voice of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, calling him to tread the way of love which had been trodden by the Master, and assuring him that the God who was now working in him was a God of love, a Father in filial fellowship with whom he had a never-failing source of fatherly help and heartening in the moral struggle.

It is on this conception of God as the ally of the better self Paul grounds his appeal to the Philippians to rise to higher attainments in the Christ-like life. "Work out your own salvation; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work." They are not left to themselves in the struggle; God is on their side, working in them and with them. It is through this working of God in conscience that the better self will gain its victories over the worse self. "The inward voice which rings out the call to heroic action—that is the voice of God. The 'upward urge of the heart' which impels us towards the heights—that is the pressure of God. The incentives which crowd in upon the conscience in the hour of crisis, to back up our weak will and give victory to the higher self over the lower—that is the grace of God." ¹

¹ *The Christ of Faith* (by the present writer), p. 227.

If God works in us that we may attain greater heights in ethical life, it is by first winning our will. God's working is sometimes spoken of as if it were some sort of semi-physical force which overrides men's will. Such an idea is absolutely alien to Paul's conception of God's working. God worketh in us that we may will the good to which He would bring us. This is an ethical good, and, apart from a good will, such a good is something inconceivable. God forces no man against his will. With the patience of an infinite love He waits and waits for the response of man's will to His appeal. If God is an ally of man's better self, man must put forth his own will-power, that he on his part may be an ally of God in furthering God's purpose with him. Man must work as well as God; work, as it has been said, "as if everything depended on God, and as if everything at the same time depended on himself."

It is true of Paul himself at any rate that his assurance of God working in him but stimulates him both to will and to work. In his career as an apostle to the Gentiles we discover no repression of his own will-force, no dulling of the sense of responsibility for turning to the fullest account the powers and opportunities which are at his command, no slackening of his resolve to do "the utmost for the highest." He is keenly conscious of the great things he can do through God "that worketh in him." "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4. 13). It is through God, whose love

manifested in Christ has laid its power upon him, that he throws himself into his work as an ambassador of Christ to the Gentiles; that he dares to express and hold to his own convictions about the Jewish law, no matter what criticism and opposition he may arouse; that he braces himself to encounter his never ending sufferings and disappointments and heartaches, not only with courage, but even with a kind of radiant joy. Both in the sphere of thought and of action Paul trusts himself, asserts himself. He has the initiative and driving force of a hero, of a true "superman." The secret of the strength and wealth of his individuality he reveals in his own words: "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15. 10).

XVI

The Spirit of God

THIS chapter has a close connection with the preceding one. What Paul means by the spirit of God is suggested by what he says of God in his appeal to the Philippians to work out their own salvation: "It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to work."

In the first place, "God that worketh *in you*" suggests one aspect of what is meant by the spirit of God—the immanence of God. The spirit of God means the presence of the indwelling God in the heart of man. It is often used in this sense in the Old Testa-

ment and in other religious literature. "The spirit which comes forth from God represents God Himself, and makes Him an abiding presence in the hearts of His people."¹ It is in keeping with this usage of the phrase in the Old Testament that Paul reminds his readers that the spirit of God dwells in them (Rom. 8. 9; 1 Cor. 3. 16); that their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in them, which they have from God (1 Cor. 6. 19).

In the second place, the words "God worketh in you, both to will and to work" suggest another aspect of what is meant by the spirit of God. The spirit of God means God energising in the heart of man; it means the power of God in the sphere of religious and ethical experience. In the Old Testament, indeed, the spirit of God is spoken of in connection with activities of man, which may be regarded as outside the sphere of strictly religious and ethical experience. For example, we are told of Samson that "the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as flax that was burned with fire, and his bands dropped from off his hands" (Judges 15. 14); and of Bezaleel we are told that he was "filled with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver and in brass" (Exodus 31. 3-4). Such a usage of the phrase is exceptional in the Old Testament, but it is instructive

¹ E. F. Scott, *The Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 43.

in as far as it suggests how closely the spirit of God was associated with the idea of power, and reminds us that when psalmists and prophets speak of the spirit of God, what they have in view is the energising of the power of God upon the heart and will of man.

The spirit of God, then, is a phrase which connotes these two things : (1) the presence of God in the heart, (2) the power of God at work in the heart.

When Paul speaks of the spirit of God, he is thinking of the presence of God in the heart and of God's power at work in the heart. Sometimes he connects spirit and power explicitly. " My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power " (1 Cor. 2. 4). " The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit " (Rom. 15. 13). If not explicitly, spirit and power are ever implicitly connected.

For a right understanding of Paul's conception of the spirit of God we must go further ; we must consider the answer which he gives to this question : For *what* is the spirit power ? His answer to this question is conditioned by his own experience of the love of God and of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. That is plain from the passage in the epistle to the Philippians which was under our consideration in the preceding chapter. He appeals to them to work out their own salvation, for it is God that worketh in them, both to will and to work. God that worketh in them is the spirit of God

working in them. What the spirit of God is power for is their salvation, and their salvation means having the mind which was in Christ Jesus. With Paul, the spirit of God is ever power to fashion men into the likeness of Christ. That is the distinctive characteristic of the Christian conception of the spirit, and Paul is unwearied in guarding his readers against the danger of cherishing any lower conception—a danger which was very real for Christian communities in a Gentile environment.

In his travels in many Gentile lands Paul had become familiar with religious cults, in which the sense of the individual being taken possession of by the god who was worshipped was a prominent feature; and he had become familiar with the emotional excitement, expressing itself in extravagant ways, by which the gatherings of the devotees for their religious worship were characterised. When he took note of the little connection there was between all that emotional excitement and the furtherance of ethical life, he could not but be deeply stirred. There was power of a sort there, but not power to advance what he reckoned man's supreme interest—goodness, and goodness as interpreted for him by the life and teaching and Cross of Jesus. By his use of the phrase, "the spirit of Christ," he warns his readers against conceptions of the spirit with which they had been familiar before they became members of the Christian Society, and reminds them that for Christians the spirit of God can never be

dissociated from Him whom they acknowledge as Lord.

That the spirit of God is power for the attainment of Christlike goodness is one of the great lessons of the first epistle to the Corinthians. The members of the Christian community at Corinth were living in an atmosphere of exceptional spiritual enthusiasm. They had been initiated into a new life; they had a new understanding of God as their loving Father; they felt themselves upheld and heartened by the comradeship of their fellow-Christians; they were lifted into new hope and new joy. The spirit of God was at work in them, begetting abounding spiritual fervour. But Paul has to remind them that spiritual fervour, invaluable in itself, must be associated with the highest things. They are in danger of making too much of the high-wrought excitement under whose influence they reach a state of ecstasy and give expression to their feelings in words which are unintelligible to their fellow-worshippers (that is, they speak with tongues). That may be a gift of the spirit, but it is not the gift of highest worth. The greatest gift of the spirit is love. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13. 1). It is in keeping with this lesson to the Corinthians about the close connection of love with the power of the spirit, that Paul speaks of the fruits of the spirit to the Galatians. Love is the first on the list. The fruit of the spirit is love, and

love's concomitants—longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control (Gal. 5. 22, 23).

In speaking of the power of God that worketh in man for fashioning him into the likeness of Christ Paul uses different phrases, with no essential difference of meaning. Sometimes he speaks of the spirit of God; at other times of the spirit of Christ; and at other times simply of the spirit, or of Christ, or of God. For example, in two verses of the epistle to the Romans, he makes use of these different phrases without discriminating between them. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in *the Spirit*, if so be that the *Spirit of God* dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. And if *Christ* is in you, the body is dead because of sin" (Rom. 8. 9, 10). A passage like this has sometimes been found disconcerting by theologians familiar with later speculations about the functions of the three persons of the Godhead. Suggestions are thrown out by way of excusing Paul's apparently somewhat inexact use of language. But is there any need of an apology for Paul? His interest is so concentrated on the experience of the power of God at work in the heart of man as *the* thing to be concerned about, that he is not greatly concerned about the particular way in which this power should be described, whether as God, or Christ, or the spirit, or the spirit of God, or the spirit of Christ. Instead of apologising for Paul's "confusion of ideas" or his lack

of exact theological terminology, it might be more profitable to sit at his feet and learn from him to concentrate attention upon the experience of God working in us and with us that we may have the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

XVII

The Meaning of God's Great World

IN the preceding chapters we have been considering some of Paul's great thoughts about the relation of God to man in the sphere of conscience. We go on to consider what Paul has to say about God's relation to the great world, which, wonderful and replete with beauty and wisdom though it be, presents us with many perplexing problems.

What is the meaning of this world in which we find ourselves? Is it a friendly world, or is it indifferent, or even hostile, to us and to our dearest interests? What is behind it all? Mere unintelligent power, or divine wisdom? The all-embracing dominance of material forces, or God who cares for us as a Father for His children and is ever working for their highest good?

There are moments when sore experiences force us to ask ourselves questions such as these; bring us face to face with the problem of the meaning of this perplexing world. How poignantly disturbing this problem may become is set forth with a singular impressiveness in Jean Paul Richter's dream of a

Godless world. In one part of the dream the dreamer hears a voice saying: "I went through the Worlds, I mounted into the Suns, and flew with the Galaxies through the wastes of Heaven; but there is no God! I descended as far as Being casts its shadow, and looked into the Abyss and cried, Father, where art thou? But I heard only the everlasting storm which no one guides, and the gleaming Rainbow of Creation hung without a Sun that made it, over the Abyss, and trickled down. And when I looked up to the immeasurable world for the Divine *Eye*, it glared on me with an empty, black, bottomless *Eye-socket*, and eternity lay upon Chaos, eating it. Cry on, ye Dissonances; cry away the Shadows, for He is not!" "Have we no Father?" asked the children, and [the voice] answered, with streaming tears, "We are all orphans, I and you: we are without Father."¹

In one form or another the problem of the meaning of the world is ever with us. It is intertwined with our religious and ethical experience. It enters deeply into all serious philosophical thinking; it may indeed be said to be *the* problem of philosophy. It was canvassed in the "Wisdom" literature of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, where we have something similar to what was reckoned philosophy by Greek-speaking Gentiles; and from the Jewish philosophers we have this as their contribution to the solution of the problem, that the wisdom of God is at the heart of the world and

¹ Carlyle's second essay on Richter.

finds expression in all the multiplicity of its phenomena. The problem was earnestly and, let it be acknowledged, fruitfully canvassed by the Stoic philosophers; and their contribution to its solution was their favourite doctrine that the divine Reason ("Logos") was at the heart of all things. Paul was not only familiar with, but also influenced by, the teaching both of Jewish and of Stoic philosophy. He was himself a philosopher, if sustained meditation on the ultimate meaning of the world is taken as the characteristic of the philosopher. He had brooded intently and to some purpose over the philosopher's problem. Here his starting point as a Christian was his experience of the love of God mediated through Jesus Christ. In that experience he had discovered the absolutely highest worth, the ultimate reality, in his own life; and in the light of that experience he read the meaning of God's great world. It was not enough for him to see everywhere the manifestation of divine Wisdom or divine Reason. He had a still grander vision. It was his passionate faith that the whole created universe had its ultimate source in the love of God as revealed in Christ; that divine Love was behind it all, sustaining and guiding it, and bringing it on towards a consummation worthy of such love.

Jesus had expressed this faith in simple language, which everyone can understand. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Matt. 11. 25). Paul, in his expression of the same faith, has not attained to the simplicity of his Master. He makes use of forms

of thought which become intelligible to those who are familiar with the phraseology of the Stoics and of Jewish Alexandrians like Philo, but which may well prove a serious obstacle to many a reader of the two passages in his epistles in which he expresses his faith that the clue to the meaning of the world is found in the love of God, and in the love of God as manifested in Christ.

These are the two passages : " Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation ; for in him all things were created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers ; all things have been created through him, and unto him ; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist (hold together) " (Col. 1. 15-17). " To us there is one God, of whom are all things, and we unto him ; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him " (1 Cor. 8. 6). Here Paul is borrowing much of the phraseology used by philosophical thinkers in connection with their speculations about the relation of the invisible God to the " Logos " and the relation of the " Logos " to the created universe. He uses them for the purpose of expressing his great thought that in the love of God, as manifested in Christ, is to be found the solution of the problem of the meaning of the world. For Paul, " the acknowledgment of God in Christ . . . solves . . . all questions in the earth and out of it." The love of God in Christ is the explanation of the creation of the universe, it is the explanation of the purpose which God is working out with the created

universe, it is the explanation of the goal for which the travail of the whole created universe is making.¹ All things have been created through Christ, and unto Christ; Christ is before all things, and in Christ all things hold together.

This conception is not reached as the result of a mere process of logical reasoning; it is a spiritual intuition, a great venture of faith springing from the deep sources of the soul. Such spiritual intuition is no mere fond dream out of touch with reality, it is born of what is most real in human experience. Take an illustration from Wordsworth's poem "composed above Tintern Abbey." He speaks of

" that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lightened.

While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things."

Wordsworth tells us what this seeing into the life of things means for him :

" And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,

¹ Compare Tennyson's words :—

" Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law."

In Memoriam, LVI.

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

There is no demonstration for the intellect in these magnificent lines. There is something higher, there is spiritual intuition, which gets closer to "the life of things" than any merely intellectual dexterity. If this is true of Wordsworth's insight into the meaning of the world, what ground is there for complaining that Paul's still grander vision of the love of God in Christ "rolling through all things" is a mere fond dream out of touch with reality?

To the question: What is the meaning of God's great world? Paul answers: It means love, the love of God in Christ. But difficulties persist in pressing upon us. If the world has been created and is being continually governed by omnipotent love, what are we to make of the manifold suffering which casts its dark shadow upon human life and upon life of every kind? Still more, what are we to make of the emergence and persistence of moral evil? These are grim realities, which it is difficult to reconcile with faith in the omnipotent love of God. Paul is keenly sensitive to the presence of these grim realities. As he looks out upon the world, he sees "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain with us" (Rom. 8. 22). At the same time, what preoccupies him is the conviction that in a world, with these grim realities in it, the greatest reality is the divine love manifested in Christ. If he is not greatly given to wrestling with the problem of the

presence of disquieting realities in the world, he throws out hints which tend at least to ease the problem. He finds that through contact with suffering some of the highest excellences of character have their best chance of being developed. The existence of moral evil is a greater mystery than that of suffering, but he finds that through contact with moral evil the love of God comes to its highest expression. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly" (Rom. 5. 20). Along such lines the problem may be eased, but it is not solved. There is something here which is unfathomable by finite man.

Let it be granted that faith in the love of God working at the heart of the world has its difficulties. Nevertheless the vision of the love of God in Christ is "the master light of all our seeing." It "brightens our life in shedding light upon the first cause and the final goal." In its light we find ourselves in a world which is friendly to us and helpful for the advancement of our highest interests; in its light fear of the world gives place to confidence and courage; in its light our watchword is not "flight from the world," but "lordship over the world."

XVIII

Christ, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God

WE have found that in all that Paul says about God he cannot get away from the thought of Christ. Into his thought of Christ there enters, of course, knowledge

of Jesus, of His personality and life and teaching, and of His death and resurrection. But there is more than such knowledge. There is his experience of what Christ has been to him in the life of fellowship of spirit with spirit. Apart from this there is no understanding of his interpretation of the significance of Christ, no clue to the unique greatness he finds in Christ or to the unique place in the spiritual sphere which he assigns to Him. What his experience of Christ has been he sums up in these words: "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. I. 29).

I. Christ is the power of God. What, in this connection, Paul means by the power of God is not the divine power manifested in the created universe, but the divine power at work in conscience for the realisation of the divine ideals for man's life. It is the power of God as the Dweller Within. The indwelling God is the spirit of God, and for Paul, as we have seen, the spirit of God means power. It is in this sense he says that Christ is the power of God. The indwelling Christ, the "Christ in me" is all one with the indwelling God, for the God who dwells in the heart of man is God as He has been manifested in Christ. So he can speak at one time of the spirit of God, and at another of the spirit of Christ. So he might have said of Christ what he said to the Philippians of God: "It is Christ that worketh in you, both to will and to work."

The power of the indwelling Christ is interpreted by

Paul as power to fashion men into the life of Christ, to bring forth in their lives the fruit of the spirit of Christ. Christ is for Paul the supreme Teacher, and the supreme Exemplar of the good-life. But he is not content with mere obedience to the precepts of Jesus or the copying of His example. Nothing less will content him than the indwelling presence of Christ as the power of God, who is at work with men that they may work out their own salvation; that they may have the mind which was in Christ Jesus. That "the power of Christ might rest upon him" was his supreme ambition for himself, and that the same power might rest upon his fellows was the aim by which he was dominated in the founding of Christian communities and in all his subsequent relations with them. To be a Christian meant for him to be mastered by the power of Christ, to have the spirit of Christ. "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8. 9).

2. Christ is not only the power of God; He is also the wisdom of God.

How did Paul come by this conception of Christ as the wisdom of God? As we have already indicated,¹ he seems to have been specially interested, perhaps even as a Pharisee, in the "Wisdom" literature of the Jews, and more particularly in the Wisdom of Solomon, one of the most interesting books of the Apocrypha, written about 100 B.C. by a Jew of Alexandria who had been greatly influenced by the Stoic, and, to a less extent, the

¹ Page 131.

Platonic philosophy.¹ The author of this book makes use of the conception of wisdom to throw light upon the meaning of the created universe. Wisdom, he teaches, is at the heart of it all. "She pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty. . . . And she, being one, hath power to do all things; and remaining in herself, reneweth all things: and from generation to generation passing into holy souls she maketh men friends of God and prophets" (7. 25-27). In one passage the author represents wisdom as thus addressing God: "With thee is wisdom, which knoweth thy works, and was present when thou wast making the world" (9. 9)—a passage which may be compared with a similar passage in the eighth chapter of the Book of Proverbs: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. . . . When he established the heavens,

¹ Traces of the influence of the Wisdom of Solomon upon Paul are pointed out by students of his epistles. One or two instances may be quoted. "A corruptible body weigheth down the soul" (9. 15; cf. 2 Cor. 5. 4). "For a potter, kneading soft earth, laboriously mouldeth each several vessel for our service: nay, out of the same clay doth he fashion, both the vessels that minister to clean uses, and those of a contrary sort" (15. 7; cf. Rom. 9. 21). "All men by nature were but vain, who had no perception of God, and from the good things that are seen, they gained not power to know him that is; neither by giving heed to the works did they recognise the artificer. . . . How is it that they did not sooner find the sovereign Lord by these his works?" (13. 1, 9; cf. Rom. 19, 20). "The unrighteous went astray very far in the ways of error, taking as gods those animals which even among their enemies were held in dishonour. . . . Wherefore the last end of condemnation came upon them" (12. 24, 27; cf. Rom. 1. 22-25).

etc. . . . then I was by him, as a master workman . . . rejoicing in his habitable earth, and my delight was with the sons of men " (Prov. 8. 22-30). Do we go far astray, if we suppose that the Jewish conception of wisdom was present to Paul's mind when he spoke of Christ as the wisdom of God?

It was, however, in connection, not with Jewish, but with Greek philosophy that Paul had occasion to speak of Christ as the wisdom of God, as " made unto us wisdom from God " (1 Cor. 1. 30).

In saying that " the Greeks seek after wisdom " (1 Cor. 1. 22) he intended no depreciation of the attempt of Greek philosophy to read the riddle of the universe. He could not but regard such an undertaking with sympathetic interest: he had himself the philosophical temper. It is improbable that he had first-hand knowledge of the writings of Plato or of other outstanding Greek philosophers. One and another passage in his epistles, however, suggests that he had at least second-hand knowledge of various aspects of Platonic and Stoic teaching, and not only knowledge, but often warm appreciation. He was no enemy of philosophy in itself. But in Corinth he was brought into contact with a kind of philosophising of which he had a poor opinion. There were would-be intellectual people, who were given to the discussion of problems which had little or no bearing on the great interests of human life, and who imagined that by the display of their dialectical subtlety and by their command of exuberant rhetorical speech they could gain a reputation as

philosophers. It is with philosophers of that sort in view that Paul speaks disparagingly of "the wisdom of the world." It is over against such spurious wisdom that he exalts Christ as the wisdom of God. Genuine seekers after wisdom, he recognised, were dealing with the vital problem of the meaning of the world. In Christ he found the true clue to insight into the meaning of the world; in Christ he found the wisdom which is from God. Love like that of Christ as the greatest thing for man to strive after, and God's love revealed in the life and sufferings of the crucified Jesus—there, said Paul, is to be found the true answer to the question of the philosopher: What is the meaning of the world? So he said to the Corinthians: "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech, proclaiming to you the mystery of God. For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified . . . and my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2. 1-4). "Christ sent me to . . . preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made void" (1 Cor. 1. 17).

If wisdom (insight into the meaning of the world) has its root in the heart captured by the love of God in Christ, there is wide room for its indefinite growth according to the temperament and opportunities of the individual. So Paul appeals to his readers to be no

longer "babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3. 1), but, in wisdom, to be "full-grown" (1 Cor. 2. 6). He himself is an example of the Christian "full-grown" in wisdom. From his experience of the love of God in Christ as his centre he goes far afield in exploring the significance of Christ for a deeper understanding of God's purpose in the universe and in the troubled history of humanity. But he does not regard the attainment of wisdom in this wide sphere as what is of highest worth in the Christian life. No; there is something which is of still higher worth. "If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13. 2).

XIX

God in Christ

WITH little difference of meaning, as far as we can see, Paul speaks now of the grace of God, and now of the grace of Christ; now of the spirit of God, and now of the spirit of Christ; now of the power of God, and now of the power of Christ; now of the indwelling of God, and now of the indwelling of Christ, the Christ that is "in me." For Paul there is some kind of unique oneness between God and Christ. His sense of that unique oneness he expresses in a phrase which seems to be of his own coining, "God in Christ"—a phrase which sums up that new understanding of God which has been under our consideration in the preceding eight chapters. What that phrase of his means is worthy of special attention.

Paul does not start here from the thought of God postulated to explain the universe and the multiplicity of its phenomena; that is, he does not start from the thought of God as the omnipotent Creator, or the First Cause, or the Great All, or the Absolute, or the Unknowable. His conception of "God in Christ" has its bearing, indeed, upon his conception of the God of the created universe, but that is not his starting point. He starts from God of whom he has had immediate experience in the sphere of conscience. What he is concerned about is the character of the God with whom he is here face to face.

It has further to be borne in mind that in using the phrase, "God in Christ," he is setting himself to tell us, not how we ought to think about Christ, but how we ought to think about God.¹ "God in Christ" means that the God of conscience has a character like that of Christ, that the God of conscience is a Christlike God.

If we bear in mind that it is the God of conscience and the character of the God of conscience Paul is here thinking of, it will be easier for us to understand how he came to coin the phrase, "God in Christ." As a Pharisee he had conceived the God of conscience as, above all, a legislator and judge whose presence inspired fear and despair. But through the revelation of God's Son in him, God is other to him than He had

¹ "In contending for the Deity of the Son [the Nicene theology], too much forgot to conceive the Deity through the Son and as the Son conceived Him."—A. M. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 91.

been; He is the God and Father of his Lord Jesus Christ; He is, above all, fatherly, reconciling, forgiving love; He is the Divine Ally of his better self. He has discovered that he had been misunderstanding the heart and will of God towards him. That discovery meant for him a "new creation." And it was through Christ that God had ushered him into that "new creation"—the Christ who had revealed the heart and will of God towards His children in the life and words and Cross of Jesus, the Christ who was now ever present and at work in the inmost shrine of his soul. So, for Paul, God in the sphere of religious and ethical experience is one with Christ and Christ is one with God; and by the phrase, "God in Christ," he expresses his sense of this unique oneness.

The oneness of God with Christ is a thought which enters deeply into all his thinking about God and man and the world. His interest in this thought is not centred in the place it may hold in a system of theological doctrine, but in the power which it brings to bear upon the religious and ethical life of every Christian. He is never weary of telling what a power it is in his own life. His faith that the God with whom he has to do in conscience, that the God who is behind all his experiences is God in Christ, throws a new light upon every dark perplexing problem, and inspires him to face every difficulty and every sore stroke with a new confidence and courage. Take, for example, his confession of the power of the thought of God in Christ, which we find in his outburst of triumphant hope in

the epistle to the Romans: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from *the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. 8. 35-39).

It was by the way of his own experience of the power which Christ had laid upon him in the sphere of his religious and ethical life that Paul came by his phrase, "God in Christ." It is a great phrase, an illumining phrase. But let it be noted that Paul's interest is not centred in the theological implications of that phrase, but in the spiritual experience of which it is the expression. He was not greatly concerned about any, not even his own, particular way of giving expression to the thought that God, for the Christian, is a Christlike God. What he was concerned about was that his fellows should share in a spiritual experience similar to his own, out of which would inevitably spring the exultant confession, in whatever form it might be expressed, that the God with whom they had to do was God as revealed in Christ.

That God, for the Christian, is a Christlike God is a conception which belongs to the very essence of the Christian faith. It had a central place in the theological thinking of the early Christian church, obscured though

it may often have been in the atmosphere of the current Greek philosophy. It found expression in the Nicene Creed, but not the best possible expression for every age.¹ In later ages it has too often been denied the sovereign place which is due to it. God the Father has been conceived as representing the divine justice in contrast with Christ as representing the divine love in such a way as to produce the impression that God is less tender and gracious in His attitude to His sinful children than Christ. Paul's great thought that the suffering, self-sacrificing love of the crucified Jesus *is* the love of God Himself has been so lost sight of that a wrong has been done to the character of God, and a serious obstacle has been put in the way of man's approach to God. What liberating power for man there is, when he realises that God is God in Christ !

In the emphasis which he puts on " God in Christ " Paul is a faithful interpreter of the mind of Jesus. Jesus served Himself heir to the best thoughts of God which had been cherished by the Jewish people ; He linked Himself to the past more decisively than did Paul with his somewhat exceptional experience of Judaism. But Jesus was conscious that it belonged to His mission to deepen and enrich the best thoughts of the past, for He had an experience of God which transcended that of those who had gone before Him. Out of His unique experience of filial fellowship with God He could say to His disciples : " No one knoweth

¹ See p. 250.

the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him " (Matt. 11. 27). His Father's love was the inspiration of the life He lived and of the words He spoke. His Father's love was the inspiration of His resoluteness in treading the *via dolorosa* from Gethsemane to Calvary. " Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me, howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt " (Mark 14. 36). It was His Father's will which found expression in the Cross. Whether or not we have in the Fourth Gospel the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, sayings such as these express the mind of Jesus: " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father "; " The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself; but the Father abiding in me doeth his works " (John 14. 9, 10).

" God in Christ," as far as the particular phraseology is concerned, we owe to Paul, but the thought which is expressed by it was learned by Paul at the feet of his Master.

C. *A New Outlook Upon the World*

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Our outlook upon the world depends, to a large extent at least, upon these two things : (1) our conception of what is most worth striving for, and (2) our conception, or, it may be, our want of any definite conception, of the ultimate ground of the world.

Our outlook upon the world will be different according as we regard "man's chief end" as the enjoyment of pleasure, or as the attainment of goodness.

Again, it will be different according as we find the ground of the world in matter and its forces, or in God. And if we find its ground in God, our outlook upon it will be different according to our different conceptions of the character of God.

XX *The Christian as the Lord of Life*

IN Luther's early tractate on Christian Liberty he lays stress on an aspect of Christianity which has been too much lost sight of, but whose significance is happily coming in our own day to be more fully appreciated. On the first page of this tractate he says : " A Christian man is the most free lord of all," and on a later page he says : " Every Christian is by faith so exalted above all things that in spiritual power he is completely lord of all things ; so that nothing whatever can do him any harm ; yea, all things are subject to him, and are compelled

to be subservient to his salvation." The lordship of the Christian over the world is one of Paul's regnant thoughts. It is the inevitable reflection of the spiritual experience which has come to him through Christ. It emerges again and again in his epistles, sometimes implicitly; but sometimes very explicitly.

In pleading with the Corinthians to get rid of party-spirit he clinches his appeal with these great words on the Christian as the lord of life: "Let no one glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3. 21-23).¹ That assertion of the wide range of the lordship of the Christian over the world is not part of a tractate on the subject. It is made quite incidentally in his handling of a trouble that is threatening to disturb the unity and peace of the Christian community. "He is rebuking the party-spirit which is splitting the Christian community into factions; one party ranging themselves under the name of Paul, another under that of Apollos, and another under that of Peter. He blames them for their sectarian narrowness. Especially does he lay stress on this, that by their sectarian narrowness they are impoverishing their Christian life. Paul, Apollos, Peter, so in effect he says to them, are all your

¹ Compare the favourite saying of the Stoics, "The wise man alone is free; he is the true King." Here we have an illustration of the way in which Paul made use of Stoic teaching that he might the more effectively commend his Christian ideas to his Gentile readers.

servants. Each of them has a service to render to you, something to teach you about Christ, some contribution to make towards the building up of your Christian character. Glory not in any one man as if he, and not God, were the central light. Each Christian teacher belongs to you all. Use each of them as God's gift to you." ¹ Then suddenly he takes wing and ranges amid the spacious grandeur of his own outlook upon the world: "All things are yours."

The fact that this outburst of triumphant confidence, as he looks out upon the great world and all its happenings, comes in incidentally, suggests that his sense of the Christian's lordship over the world was an abiding conviction, ready to flash forth into expression in dealing with the Christian's attitude to the problems of daily duty. Just as in a later part of this same epistle, where he is dealing with the problem of the exercise of the various spiritual gifts bestowed upon the members of the Christian community, he suddenly breaks off the particular line of argument he has been pursuing, and bursts forth with his great hymn in praise of the more excellent way of love. These arresting *obiter dicta* ("asides") of his are amongst the most precious things in his epistles.

"All things are yours." What a regal outlook upon the world we have here! The secret of this regal outlook Paul reveals in the closing words of his fervid outburst: "Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." The Corinthian Christians belong to Christ, they

¹ *The Faith of St. Paul*, page 195.

acknowledge Christ as their Lord, they let themselves be mastered by His ideals of the truly good life. The Christ whom they acknowledge as Lord belongs to God; that is, He is the expression of the heart and will of God, the expression of the purpose of love which God is working out with His children through all that happens in the created universe. "Through faith in God in Christ," said Luther, "a Christian man is the most free lord of all."

Elsewhere in his epistles Paul expresses this same thought in a different way. For example, he speaks of the world as a heritage to be taken possession of, not as an enemy to be feared. "Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear" (Rom. 8. 15). "God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bond-servant but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God" (Gal. 4. 6, 7). "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8. 17). "God's world is the heritage of God's children; their own property to be used and enjoyed for realising God's purpose with them. . . . As a son and therefore an heir of God made free of his Father's world, Paul is more thrilled by the prospect of the good he can win from the world than depressed by the thought of its possible ills."¹ In Browning's words,

"This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely and means good."²

¹ *The Faith of St. Paul*, p. 195.

² *Fra Lippo Lippi*.

In Paul's conception of the Christian's lordship over the world there is liberating power of singular strength and of vast scope. It delivers us from the paralysing effect of distrust and fear of the world. It makes wide room, not only for contentment with the world as God has planned it, but for positive joy in it. It makes wide room for the pursuit and enjoyment of beauty and truth and goodness, and of whatever else belongs to the true worth of life. It is in irreconcilable opposition to that flight from the world which has been an outstanding feature of many oriental religions, and which has not been unknown in Christianity. God, it is supposed, is most surely reached and enjoyed, the more we withdraw ourselves from the world and its interests. The world is an obstacle in our way to God, not itself a way on which we can come to God. The most complete renunciation of the world which is possible is therefore the highest ideal for a religious man. Now, it need not be denied that such flight from the world, even in its extremest forms, has a certain worth. It fosters concentration upon the inner life in which the individual soul enters into union and communion with God. It is a protest against such an absorption with the world and its interests as issues in forgetfulness of the things of eternal worth; and by that protest it may prick the conscience of the worldly-minded. Let all that be granted. Paul, too, calls for concentration upon the inner life and for the unworldly mind, but mere renunciation falls far below the grandeur of his conception of lordship over the world. As a true Jew he

has a warm appreciation of the saying of the Hebrew psalmist : " The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof " (Ps. 24. 1, quoted 1 Cor. 10. 26). It is possible that he may have known how Jesus had a many-sided interest in His Father's world; how He found His Father present and at work everywhere—in the beauty of the lilies of the field and in the wonder of the sprouting seed and of the growing plant, in the social life of His fellows, in the little children and the home. Be that as it may, through his experience of the Christ in fellowship with whom he lived his life, Paul was led on to regard the world as essentially good. For the love of God in Christ had called it into being, and was at the heart of it, directing and shaping it for the realising of love's great purpose. Under the power of that conviction he could not but believe that he had the world, all things in the world, on his side as a ministrant of God to subserve his own highest interests. It was inevitable, therefore, that he should criticise and frown upon the ascetic theory that the world is not a help but only a hindrance to the attainment of the Christlike life.

He believed that love is the greatest thing in earth or in heaven : how could he ever have imagined that the secret of success for the growth of love like that of Christ was to be found in withdrawal from that life with and for his fellows, in which love has its best chance of being drawn out and strengthened? He believed that he was called to be a fellow-worker with God in carrying out God's purpose of love with the whole

family of mankind : how could he ever have imagined that he could best be God's fellow-worker by shutting himself up in his own inner life of communion with God and leaving the evil world outside of him to go its own evil way ?

*XXI**Otherworldliness ?*

OTHERWORLDLINESS is a word of ambiguous meaning. It may mean a refusal to be so absorbed with the lower interests of life that its higher interests are ignored or thrown into the background. On the other hand, it may mean such an absorption with the future world that the essential worth of the world in which we find ourselves here and now is so depreciated that carefulness in the handling of it is belittled. In the latter meaning of the word, otherworldliness is difficult to reconcile with Paul's conviction that the Christian has lordship over the present world and that there is nothing in the world which he cannot turn to account for the advancement of his highest interests. It has, however, been alleged again and again that Paul took up a radically pessimistic attitude towards the present world. This pessimism is traced back to the peculiar Jewish atmosphere in which he had been reared. What this Jewish atmosphere was, calls for a brief explanation.

The Jewish people, stirred by the inspiring messages of their prophets, had for generations cherished great dreams of what Jehovah would yet do for themselves,

and of what He would do by means of the Jewish national life and the Jewish religion for the Gentile nations. But from the time of the exile in the sixth century B.C. the iron entered into the soul of the Jewish people. They did not renounce their dreams of a glorious future for their nation, but instead of the fulfilment of these dreams there fell to their lot a harrowing experience of suffering and humiliation. In the earlier half of the second century B.C. the light of hope was rekindled by a heartening message from the author of the Book of Daniel. He appealed to his countrymen to be loyal to their Jewish faith and their Jewish hope; to put their trust in the God of their fathers, who would not fail to achieve the purpose He was working out with them. That writing was the first of a series of writings, of "tracts for bad times," now spoken of as apocalypses (unveilings of the future). Their authors were intent upon urging their countrymen not to lose heart; to hold fast to their faith that God, who was on their side, would in one way or another intervene on their behalf and bring His purpose with them to fulfilment. In the first century B.C., and especially in the latter half of it, these apocalypses had an extraordinary influence upon the Jewish people. At a time when their political servitude to the apparently omnipotent power of Rome seemed to make impossible their deliverance from political servitude and the fulfilment of their cherished dreams, these apocalypses fired their imagination with the prospect of a day not far off, when God would suddenly and miraculously

intervene to bring the present world-order to an end and bring in a new world-order, in which the Jewish dreams for their nation would be realised. The present world-order was spoken of as the "present age" and the future world-order as the "coming age." As to what the future world was to be, there was no uniformity in the conception. Sometimes it was conceived as an essentially terrestrial order, in which the Jewish people were to possess sovereign power and bring the Gentile nations, by persuasion or by force, under their sway. Or it was conceived as a transcendental order, in which the terrestrial conditions of life would largely disappear and give place to conditions not unlike those which Christians are accustomed to picture as belonging to the heavenly life "which lies beyond death." Then, whether the future world-order was conceived in a more terrestrial or in a more transcendental fashion, different individuals differed in the conception of the blessings they associated with the advent of the new world-order. Some of them concentrated their thoughts upon the increase of material prosperity and happiness, while the more spiritually-minded concentrated their thoughts upon closer fellowship with God and higher ethical life. The whole conception of the future world-order was extraordinarily fluid, but it was a powerful factor in the outlook of the Jewish people at the beginning of the Christian era.

This brief account of the Jewish atmosphere in which Paul was reared has been necessary for a right estimate

of the allegation that his attitude to the present world was radically pessimistic.

Whatever may have been Paul's opinions about a catastrophic intervention of God in the near or more distant future, it was his unshakable conviction that with the advent of Jesus of Nazareth the new world-order was already present. He was sure that he himself was living in the new world-order. All that as a Pharisee he may have ever longed for and hoped for as the good that would accrue to him at the advent of the new world-order, he found to be already his through the advent of Jesus. Greater things might be in store for him in the future, but with his experience of the love of God in Christ and of the Christlike love by which he was now inspired it was impossible for him to think lightly of the present life: it was too rich in possibilities of attaining what he reckoned most worth striving for. Further, believing, as he did, that God was working out a purpose of love with the present world, that the present world was called into being and ruled by the divine love manifested in Christ, through whom all things were created and in whom all things hold together, how could he have reconciled this faith of his with a pessimistic attitude towards God's great world and counted it of little or no worth in comparison with some future world-order to be inaugurated with a catastrophic divine intervention? It was not in this fashion he related life in the present world to life in the future world-order. The blessed life of the future was not essentially different from the life that

could be realised here and now; it was the full fruition of the present life of filial fellowship with God and of that love which never faileth. The Christlike life is the "earnest" of the fuller life that is to be, but if the Christlike life can be lived here and now, no room is left for a pessimistic attitude towards the present world.

But if Paul did not share the views of some of his pessimistic countrymen about the worth of the present world, it is clear that both he and his fellow-Christians were powerfully influenced by the Jewish apocalyptic imagery in their forecast of the future history of the movement inaugurated by Jesus. The coming of the Kingdom of God with power, of which Jesus had spoken, they interpreted as involving a catastrophic intervention of God in the near future. As Jews they had never dreamed of the Messiah coming into the world as Jesus came, living the kind of life He lived, and dying the death He died upon the Cross: the apocalyptic imagery was altogether out of touch with such a Messiah. But as Christians they were still so greatly under the spell of Jewish apocalyptic imagery that they made use of it in picturing to themselves the coming of the Kingdom of God with power.

No one can read Paul's epistles without becoming aware of the expectation he cherished that Christ would soon appear again, to consummate, not to inaugurate, the new world-order.

He even expected, at least till near the close of his career, that Christ would appear for this purpose within

the limits of his own lifetime. This thought of the imminence of the Parousia, of the Day of Christ, gave a keen edge to his appeal to his converts to be the more intensely careful to live a worthy Christlike life. "The day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13. 12). "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night . . . let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5. 2, 6). "May your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5. 23).

But did this thought of the imminence of the coming of Christ lead Paul to take up a pessimistic attitude towards the present world? In support of the allegation that it did, we are referred to a passage in First Corinthians in which he is discouraging his readers from taking upon themselves the responsibilities and cares of married life. "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.¹ . . . This I say, brethren, the time is shortened (that is, the coming of Christ is at hand), that henceforth both those who have wives may be as though they had none; and those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy, as though they possessed not; and those that use the world, as not using it to the full: for the fashion of this world (the present world-order) passeth away. . . . I would have

¹ As to Paul's inadequate appreciation of the spiritual worth of wedded life see *The Faith of St. Paul*, p. 198, *note*.

you to be free from cares (the cares of married life) " (1 Cor. 7. 25-32). Here there does seem to be a strain of otherworldliness in the depreciatory sense of the word, enough at least to let us understand why some of his converts were tempted at times to make the nearness of the coming of Christ an excuse for slackness in the discharge of daily duty. But the real significance of the passage lies in a quite different direction. Paul is here suggesting what attitude must be taken up to the world, if the real worth of the world is to be made our own. If we get so entangled with the lower interests of the world as to neglect "the things which are above," the things of eternal worth, the things in which Christ found the true worth of life, we cut ourselves off from the chance of getting out of the world the latent worth that is in it. To get the best possible out of the world, a certain detachment from it is indispensable, such a detachment as will help us to handle the varied interests of human life in a higher and more fruitful way, such a detachment as will have its issue in a richer and nobler life, not only for ourselves, but also for our fellows. "We are truly cut off from the world," says Herrmann, "when we learn to use it aright."¹ And Baron von Hügel has said: "The movement of the Christian life is not a circle round a single centre—detachment—but an ellipse round two centres—detachment and attachment."

¹ *Communion with God*, p. 202.

FEAR of the universe has been a disturbing element in human experience. We are familiar with what travellers and missionaries have told of the misery by which the life of uncivilised peoples is darkened through their belief that there are ever hovering near them unseen malign powers, plotting manifold evils against them. This belief in the existence of unseen malign powers has not been confined to uncivilised peoples. Amongst the ancient Persians, with Zoroaster as their teacher, a solution of the problem of evil in the world was sought by postulating that there were two great rival powers at work in the world, and in perpetual conflict with each other—Ormuzd, the good power (God, as we should say) and Ahriman, the evil power (the Devil). In the later Judaism, whether or not this was due to the influence of Persian ideas, there was an extraordinary development of angelology and more especially of demonology. In New Testament times there was a widespread belief among the Jews in the existence of demons to whose malign influence they attributed many of the ills, including mental disorders and various physical infirmities and maladies, which befell them. The malign influence of the demons was at work, too, in the moral sphere. The head of the hierarchy of the demons was ever plotting to lead men into sin. “Your

¹ Some of the ideas in this chapter have been already suggested in other chapters. It may be convenient to focus them here.

adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour " (1 Peter 5. 8). " Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual (supernatural) hosts of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) places " (Eph. 6. 11, 12). In this belief in demons fear of the universe had a natural root. But it has had other roots. In Paul's day educated Gentiles, who no longer believed in the gods and demons of a polytheistic religion, could speak of the ultimate ground of the world as Chance or Fate or Necessity. But by whatever name the omnipotent power was designated, it stood in no friendly relation to man; it did its work, indifferent to man's interests, heedless alike of his happiness and of his moral being. (In our own day we have something similar in the magnifying of " matter " as the ultimate ground of the world.)

Though it may not be associated with conceptions which were current in earlier times, fear of the universe is with us still. There come to us or to those whom we love tragic experiences, which stir within us torturing questions: What does this world mean with us? Are we and our dearest interests of no account in the onward sweep of its pitiless forces? Are we gripped in the clutch of some mighty power as blind as it is cruel? *Can* there be a good God who is caring for us? How else than with fear of the universe can we face the

present or look forward to the future and what it may have in store for us? At moments when questions such as these are casting thick darkness around us and quenching joy in life, what Paul has to say to us about the "Friend behind phenomena" is a veritable message of good cheer.

It is not with fear that Paul looks out upon the world in which he finds himself, but with a great expectancy. "We know," he says, "that all things work together for good" (Rom. 8. 28). The world is not hostile to his interests; it is on his side, co-operating with him. Whatever may be the happenings, they are ever affording him fresh opportunities of achieving what he has set his heart upon. He sees in the world something other than a mere welter of mighty forces. It is the world of the God and Father of his Lord Jesus Christ. It has been created by, and is ruled by, the divine love mirrored in the life and death of Jesus. Purposive love has been at work in it from the beginning, and the goal of that purposive love is the fashioning of the family of mankind into conformity with the likeness of Christ. Dominated by such convictions, he is delivered from fear of the world. He finds himself in a world which is a divine means for helping him to realise his own high ideals of man's true life. So it is in no mere attitude of stoical resignation he confronts the world, but in the attitude of one who is conscious of his lordship over the world, who knows that all things are his; that nothing can happen to him, which cannot be pressed into the service of his highest interests.

Of the many illustrations of Paul's experience of deliverance through Christ from the bondage of fear of the universe, there is one which is worthy of notice. In more than one of his epistles he speaks of "principalities" and "powers" (Rom. 8. 38; Col. 1. 16; 2. 10, 15; cf. Eph. 1. 21, 3. 10, 6. 12). Such phrases are alien to our modern ways of thinking; they belong, as we have pointed out in an earlier part of the chapter, to speculations about the unseen supernatural world which were current in later Judaism. How far Paul shared these current conceptions, it is difficult to say. What seems certain is that in speaking of "principalities" and "powers" it was their malign influence which he had chiefly in view. But whatever may have been his opinions about these unseen supernatural beings or forces, his conviction about the supremacy of the love of God in Christ in the government of the world undermined the current belief in demons and delivered the Christian, Jew or Gentile, from fear of the demons. "He cut away the angelic (supernatural) Rulers and Powers from us, exposing them to the world and triumphing over them in the Cross" (Col. 2. 15, M.). "For I am persuaded that neither . . . angels,¹ nor principalities . . . nor powers . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8. 38, 39).

Paul makes no attempt to give a proof, satisfying to everybody's intellect, of the friendliness of the universe.

¹ Paul seems to have no thought of *good* angels.

No such proof can be given. Faith in the friendliness of the universe springs from a personal spiritual experience, in which, indeed, the intellect is involved, but much more than the intellect. "All things work together for good," not to everybody, but "to them that love God," to those who put their trust in the love and wisdom of God, and who are fellow-workers with God in carrying out His purpose for themselves and their fellows to conform them to the image of His Son. Paul is not concerned to prove that "whatever is is right" or that this is "the best possible world." What concerns him here is to utter his conviction that the world will *prove itself* friendly to those who hold fast their faith in the love of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and whose chief ambition in all their efforts and struggles is to become more and more conformed to the likeness of Christ.¹

This question, however, is raised: Is the belief that all things work together for good to those who put their trust in the love of God and are striving after likeness to Christ solidly grounded, or is it nothing more than a fond dream? It is, indeed, a venture of faith, but it is a venture of faith which has been abundantly verified.²

Paul found his belief verified in his own experience. The longer he confronted the world and all its happenings in the strength of this belief, and the more dis-

¹ "The world is made for the hero, and the hero for the world." Principal Jacks, *Religious Perplexities*, p. 35.

² The belief in the reign of law in the physical world is also a venture of faith; it is accepted by us because it has stood the test of verification.

coveries he made of the wonderful way in which he could press into his service everything that might seem on the first blush to be hostile to his interests, the fuller became the verification of his belief.

But this also must be kept in view, that while Paul never wavers in his belief that all things work together for his highest good, he is under no illusion about the perfection of the world as it now is. He is sensitively alive to grim facts which challenge any such interpretation of the world. He speaks of the creation being "subjected to vanity," "of the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain with us until now" (Rom. 8. 20, 22). He has his speculations about the origin of "the bondage of corruption" in which the whole creation is now involved: man's sin must bear the responsibility. But in spite of all the grim facts he clings to the conviction, rooted in his own experience, that in the struggle to become Christlike the world is co-operating with him.

For Paul, to believe in a friendly universe is an integral factor in the faith of a Christian. To quarrel with the world as God has planned it, to take up an attitude of revolt against it, to give way to unavailing complaints and sour self-pity, would be to remain unreconciled to God. Reconciliation to God carries with it filial acceptance of the Father's world, and of the lot, however hard it may be, which the Father has appointed for us. This does not mean a quietistic acquiescence in things as they are. There are things in the world which are not in accordance with God's plan, things

against which God is struggling. To those who have been reconciled to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ there comes an urgent and never-ending call to be fellow-workers, fellow-strugglers with God, to raise the world-order ever nearer to the divine ideal.

XXIII Suffering Less a Problem to Solve than an Opportunity to Seize

How can the sufferings we experience, and the sufferings we see everywhere around us, be reconciled with our faith in God? That is a problem which presses hard upon faith. Many solutions have been proposed, some of which do, indeed, ease the problem but leave us still in presence of a mystery.

Paul does not brood over this dark problem as the author of the Book of Job and one and another of the Psalmists do. He accepts much of the traditional Jewish speculations, but it is not from the angle of a theoriser that he is given to look out upon suffering. The question with which he is chiefly concerned is this: "How can all this suffering be best turned to account for the furtherance of my own highest good and the highest good of my fellows?" And we may find that by turning aside from theoretical speculations and concentrating attention upon the wealth of service which suffering, if only it is rightly handled, may do for us in the thick of the struggles and heartaches of daily life, he is putting us on the right track for the best available solution of the perplexing problem of the

existence of suffering in a world ruled by a God of love.

In a short poem, which is an illumining commentary on Paul's attitude to suffering, Wordsworth portrays the Happy Warrior :

" Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear and Bloodshed, miserable train !
Turns his necessity to glorious gain."

"Turning necessity to glorious gain" has been a favourite theme with the world's moral teachers. From the ancient Greeks we have this fine saying : " Sufferings are schoolings." The Stoics were never weary of insisting that a stable and worthy character was to be won through unceasing conflict with adverse circumstances. In our own day Richard Rothe has said that " without suffering is no man ennobled." That has been the text on which Browning preaches again and again, as in *Rabbi ben Ezra* :

" A spark disturbs our clod ;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must believe.
Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids not sit nor stand but go !
Be our joys three parts pain !
Strive, and hold cheap the strain ;
Learn, nor account the pang ; dare, never grudge the throe ! "

On this theme Paul rises to great heights. For him the supreme excellence of moral character is love, and it is because this conviction of his enters so constantly and so commandingly into what he says about the

ministry of suffering that he has here a place of his own amongst the world's teachers.

It is his great ambition to be more and ever more laid hold of and ruled in all his thoughts and activities by the power of love, of love like that of Jesus. Such love, he knows, can only be reached on the way of suffering : it was on the way of suffering it was reached by the Master. So he would share Christ's sufferings that he may share Christ's love. As he tells us in a passage already quoted : " We are pressed on every side yet not straitened ; perplexed, yet not unto despair ; pursued, yet not forsaken ; smitten down, yet not destroyed ; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh " (2 Cor. 4. 8-11.)¹ And in this other passage : " Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ (the love of Christ) may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong " (2 Cor. 12. 9, 10). Sufferings are multiplied for Paul, but he handles them, not as a problem to be worried by, but as an opportunity to be seized, as his " chance o' the prize of learning love," life's greatest prize.

¹ " If life with its trials frays the flesh, what matters it when the light of the spirit shines through with only a fuller potency ? " Edward Dowden, *The Life of Robert Browning*, p. 134 (Everyman's Ed.).

Further, Paul is concerned not only with the service which suffering may do for himself in achieving a Christlike character, but also with the service his love-inspired suffering may do for his fellows. Here he strikes a singularly high note. Of the Happy Warrior Wordsworth says :

“ If he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired.”¹

“ Attired with sudden brightness, like a man inspired ”—that is an apt description of Paul’s temper in taking upon himself his heavy load of suffering for the good of his fellows. “ Now I rejoice,” he says to the Colossians, “ in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ² in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the Church ” (Col. 1. 24). Referring to the possibility of his death as the result of his trial in Rome, he says to the Philipians : “ If I am poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all ” (Phil. 2. 17). And to the Corinthians he says : “ For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ. But whether we be afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or whether we be comforted, it is for your

¹ Compare R. L. Stevenson’s words about Walt Whitman : “ He treats evil and sorrow in a spirit almost as of welcome; as an old sea-dog might have welcomed the sight of the enemy’s topsails off the Spanish main.”

² Not the afflictions of Jesus, but his own Christlike afflictions.

comfort, which worketh in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer " (2 Cor. I. 5, 6). To accept suffering without murmuring is a great achievement. Paul goes further; he rejoices in his suffering. For a great love inspired his suffering. "Without love the life that love leads joyfully were full of pain."¹ His love-inspired suffering was one of the secrets of what he accomplished as an apostle of Christ to the Gentiles; it made credible his message about Jesus Christ and His cross. How then could he do anything else than rejoice in tribulation?

It was at the Cross of Christ Paul came by his understanding of the ministry of suffering. In the Cross he saw the depths to which the love of God could stoop and the heights to which the love of man could rise. The love which was at the heart of the Cross laid its power upon him, it worked into his life to transform it into the likeness of Christ's. And what that love was doing for himself he was sure that it would do for others; that it held the secret of the transformation of the life of humanity. So his message was centred not in the teaching of Jesus but in Christ and Christ crucified.

It is little wonder, then, that Paul did not worry himself about suffering as a problem to be solved by reasoning, but was ever intent upon seizing the opportunities it brought within his reach for attaining the high ends on which his heart was set. Is it not just along this line we shall most surely find light upon the mystery of the existence of suffering in a world ruled

¹ *The Mystery of Pain*, by James Hinton.

by a God of love; if not full light, yet light enough for cheering guidance in the rough and dark places of life's pathway? If pleasure and worldly prosperity are the things we regard as most worth striving for, the problem of suffering may become ever darker and more distressing. If, on the other hand, it is our chief ambition to be conformed to the likeness of Christ and to have fellowship with Christ in loving service to our fellows, we may be able to make our own Paul's triumphant words: "We rejoice in our tribulations" (Rom. 5. 3).

XXIV

Attitude to Death

WORDSWORTH'S *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* is meant to be a justification of "the faith that looks through death." It may seem at first sight that in its eleven stanzas there is little, if any, argument in defence of faith in immortality. Closer study, however, will reveal that Wordsworth is setting forth what is really the strongest of all arguments for such faith. Recollections of early childhood, or rather his mature reflections on the experience of childhood, give him an unshakable assurance of man's affinity with what is eternal.

"Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind—

.

"Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by."

In reviewing the years of childhood, what breeds in him perpetual benediction is

"Those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence.

"Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither."

From earliest childhood man belongs to God and to eternity.

"Not in entire forgetfulness.
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home;
Heaven lies about us in our infancy."¹

Such is Wordsworth's line of argument in defence of "the faith that looks through death." He grounds it on man's affinity with what is divine and eternal.

We have here a suggestion which may be helpful

¹ Compare Wordsworth's lines in the *Prelude*, p. 131 :

"Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be."

for an understanding of Paul's attitude to death. He might have had little sympathy with one and another idea expressed in Wordsworth's Ode, but he had an intense conviction that faith in immortality is deeply rooted in the experience of living for the things that are of eternal worth. "We know," he says to the Corinthians, "that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5. 1).¹ And the ground of that knowledge of his is indicated in the immediately preceding verses. "Though my outward man decays, my inward man is renewed day after day. The slight trouble of the passing hour results in a solid glory past all comparison, for those of us whose eyes are on the unseen, not on the seen ;

¹ The "earthly house of our tabernacle" is the body we have in the present state of our existence; the "building from God" is the more glorious kind of body which God has prepared for us in the state of existence after death. Paul nowhere suggests that the body we have now is identical with the body we shall have hereafter. On the contrary, he is at pains to make it clear that "the building from God . . . eternal, in the heavens" will be something nobler than "the earthly house of our tabernacle." "We wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3. 20, 21). "Some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest . . . thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat; or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15. 35-44).

for the seen is transient, the unseen eternal" (2 Cor. 4. 17, 18, M.).

It is therefore natural that Paul should so frequently associate faith in immortality with the spirit, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Life in the spirit *is* eternal life. Because it means fellowship with the eternal God and the pursuit of the things that are of eternal worth, it carries in the heart of it faith in immortality. Those who share the life of Christ, who belongs pre-eminently to the sphere of spirit ("The Lord is the spirit," 2 Cor. 3. 17), will also share the immortal life of their risen, ever-living Lord. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8. 11). Paul draws a sharp distinction between life in the flesh with its inevitable issue in death, and life in the spirit with its inevitable issue in a higher, fuller life that is yet to be. "He that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. 6. 8). The same sharp distinction is drawn, where life in the spirit is spoken of in different phraseology: "that, as sin (life in the flesh) reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5. 21). "The wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6. 20). In this connection it is worthy of special notice how Paul conceives his own participa-

tion in immortal life to depend upon a life of righteousness which is of God by faith; in other words, upon life in the spirit. He tells the Philippians that it is his ambition to "gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law . . . but the righteousness which is of God by faith," and to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death; *if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead*" (Phil. 3. 8-11).

The conviction that eternal life here and hereafter is the inevitable issue of life lived in the spirit by Christ is the root of Paul's faith in immortality. Of that conviction we have a luminous expression in Paul's phrase, "the earnest of the spirit." In speaking to the Corinthians of his hope that what is mortal will be swallowed up of life, he says: "Now he that wrought us for this very thing (for this hope) is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 5. 5). An "earnest" is a "foretaste, instalment, pledge, of anything afterwards to be received in greater abundance," as in Shakespeare,

"It is an earnest of a further good
That I mean to thee."

and in Wordsworth,

"The primrose flower peeps forth
To give an earnest of the spring."

So for Paul the present experience of life in the spirit is a foretaste or pledge of a greater abundance of this

life hereafter. And from the phrase, "the earnest of the Spirit," we get an indication of Paul's conception of the nature of the future life. He is not concerned with any detailed forecast of what the future life will be. It is enough for him that the Christ-life of which he has had so blessed an experience here will come to its full fruition hereafter.

So Paul can look death in the face, not only with calm confidence, but even at times with a wistful longing. "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . I am in a strait betwixt the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake" (Phil. i. 21-24). Death he can count among the things that work together for his good. All things are his; death as well as life is his. Not even death can darken his outlook upon the world.

XXV

Hope that Putteth not to Shame

It is significant for Paul's outlook upon the world that he speaks, not only of the God of love but also of the God of hope: that is suggestive of the large place which he gives to hope in the Christian life. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15. 13). He puts hope alongside of faith and love in the trinity of Christian graces. "We give thanks to God always for you all . . . remembering without ceasing your work of faith and

labour of love and *patience of hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ " (1 Thess. 1. 2, 3). " Let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for a helmet, *the hope of salvation* " (1 Thess. 5. 8). " Now abideth faith, *hope*, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love " (1 Cor. 13. 13).

This emphasis upon hope marks out Paul as an optimist. What is specially noteworthy is the root from which springs his optimistic outlook upon the world. There is a facile optimism which springs from a refusal to face the hard facts which seem to be irreconcilable with an optimistic outlook upon the world, or from some exceptional experience of freedom from the ills of life. The hope, which springs from roots such as these, may be shattered by closer contact with the evil that is in the world or by a larger personal experience of the heartaches to which flesh is heir. It may be found to be a hope that " putteth to shame." With Paul there is no shutting of the eyes to the hard facts. When he looks out upon the world, he recognises " that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain." He knows the seamy side of human life. In the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans he has drawn a lurid picture of one side of the moral condition of the peoples with whom he has been brought into contact. Further, in a world of suffering he himself has lived no sheltered life. Recall his own account of this aspect of his life: " Are they (Judaising Christians) ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labours more abundantly, in

prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside the things which I omit, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is made to stumble, and I burn not? ” (2 Cor. II. 23-29).

Face to face with the hard facts Paul abates no jot of hope. He discloses to us the secret of his unquenchable hope. “ Hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts ” (Rom. 5. 5). His optimism is rooted in his experience of the love of God. In the light of that experience he interprets the great mysterious world in which he finds himself. It is the world of the God and Father of his Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God has called it into being. The purposive love of God is at work at the heart of all things, and the ultimate goal of that purposive love is the fashioning of men into the likeness of Christ. Paul makes his own that purpose of God. It is the supreme aim of his life to “ know ” Christ, to become one with him in heart and will, to be inspired

by the love manifested in His sufferings and death. So neither contact with the evil of the world nor his own experience can avail to dim his hope. His handling of the hard facts has even served to make the light of hope burn the more brightly. He has discovered that it is through suffering he has had his greatest opportunity for growing into the likeness of Christ. How then can his suffering be at odds with his hope? He can face whatever suffering may be in store for him with the confident assurance that he will win from it gains which could not otherwise be his. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . In all these things we are *more than conquerors* through him that loved us" (Rom. 8. 35-37). It is in the thick of the clash with suffering he has learned to see in it, not hope's enemy, but hope's ally. As he himself tells us quite explicitly: "We rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience (endurance); and patience, probation (tested character); and probation (tested character), hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts" (Rom. 5. 3-5).

When we consider where Paul's hope that putteth not to shame was rooted, we can understand why he should have given it a place alongside of faith and love in his trinity of the supreme graces of Christian character—a place, let it be said, which is too often denied to it. For Paul, where there is faith in, or rather experience

of, the love of God, and where a Christlike life of love is regarded as the thing most worth striving for, there hope that putteth not to shame must inevitably spring up. To Paul a pessimistic Christian would have seemed a paradox : so closely did he link hope with faith and love.

Paul was himself a great exemplar of a life lived in hope,

“ One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.”

Here was one secret of his influence as an apostle of Christ (“ the greatest optimist the world has ever seen ”¹) to the Gentiles. Men and women who came in contact with him might not understand all that he said to them in his addresses and letters, but this optimism of his, springing from a great love, they *could* understand. Living in bondage to the fear of the world, fear of hostile unseen powers, fear of death, fear of life, the message of good cheer expressed in his words and illustrated in his own life opened up a new world for them. It turned fear into hope and despair into joy; it gave them an “ eager and courageous ” outlook upon the world.

Paul is dear to Christian people to-day, because he is so great a quickener of hope and courage in the battle of life. Many of his readers may be sorely perplexed

¹ E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, II. p. 109.

by his strange phraseology and subtle arguments, but behind all this they hear the voice of a Great-heart who can help them to "the hope that putteth not to shame." In his company they are made aware that life, lived in hope springing from experience of the love of God, is "not a life of suffering and trembling, nor of asceticism in the sense of self-torment; not a funeral march, but a pæan of victory"; for hope "sets all the forces of the spirit in motion."¹

¹ Adaptation of a sentence of Höffding, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, about the effect of the expectation of the Parousia upon the early Christians.

D. *The Vision of a New Humanity*

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We have up to this point been chiefly occupied with Paul's teaching about the individual. We now go on to consider what he has to teach us about the relation of the individual to the social life with whose interests his own are closely linked.

The phrase which Jesus used in this connection was the "Kingdom of God," familiar to the Jews to whom he spoke. Only occasionally does Paul speak of the Kingdom of God. In the Gentile world that phrase might have led to misunderstandings, especially with the representatives of the imperial government. Paul expresses what Jesus meant by that phrase in language more intelligible to Gentiles and less likely to arouse suspicion.

Too little attention has been given to Paul's teaching about the new humanity. As a result, the significance of his "social message" has not been sufficiently appreciated, nor his conception of the Christian Church as a means of furthering the wide interests of the whole human race.

XXVI

The Second Adam

It was through his own personal experience Paul came to understand the significance of Christ. It was therefore inevitable that the relation of Christ to the individual should have a predominant place in all his thinking. But he could not conceive of a Christian

man as an isolated individual. Such a conception would have been out of keeping with the genius of the religion of Israel. As a Jew he had learned that no individual could be a true Jew who did not identify himself with the life of his people, and did not give himself to the service of the well-being of his people. Besides, he had learned from Israel's greatest teachers that a true Jew had to pass beyond the pale of the Jewish nation and interest himself in the religious well-being of the Gentile peoples with whom his own people were brought into contact; that he had to consider how he could help his own people to become "a light to the Gentiles." It is no groundless assumption that while he was still a Pharisee Paul had brooded over the problem of the Gentile peoples.¹ Deeply stirred he may well have been by inspiring visions of God's purpose with humanity as well as with the Jews. By such an inspiring vision as that of Isaiah: "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between the nations, and shall decide concerning many peoples: and they shall beat their

¹ See p. 54.

swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more " (Isaiah 2. 2-4).

As a Pharisee Paul was no narrow individualist in his religion. When he became a Christian, his interest in the wide life of humanity did not wane. On the contrary, it became more intense.

If Paul, while still a Pharisee, had his dreams of a great future not only for his own people but also for the Gentiles, the experience which had come to him through Christ of the love of God and of " the spirit of life in Christ Jesus " revolutionised these dreams of his. That experience, as we have seen, revolutionised his ideal of the good life and his understanding of the character of God. It set up an extraordinary ferment of thought and also of imagination. It was at the root of his new interpretation of the meaning of God's great world. Especially was it at the root of his vision of a new humanity.

Through his experience of God's revelation of His Son in him he reached his conviction that with Christ there had come a new stage in the history of humanity, a new departure in the fulfilment of God's eternal purpose with humanity. Paul thinks of Christ as the inaugurator of a new humanity, as virtually, though he himself does not use this exact phrase, the second Adam. He contrasts the first Adam, the Adam of the story in Genesis, with Christ the second Adam. " The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam

became a life-giving spirit." "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven" (1 Cor. 15. 45, 47). He contrasts the old humanity of which Adam is the head with the new humanity of which Christ is the head. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15. 48). In the epistle to the Romans we find a similar contrast drawn between the characteristic features of the lower side of man's life—flesh (what is carnal or merely psychical), sin, death—and the characteristic features of the higher side of man's life—spirit, righteousness, eternal life: Adam stands for the lower side of man's life and Christ for the higher side. "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin. . . . If, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one, much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5. 12-17). Here Paul is less concerned with mere history than with drawing out the contrast between the life of the "old Adam" and the new life that comes through Christ. In working out this contrast he borrows conceptions which were current in the rabbinical schools and elsewhere, but which are not essential to the thought to which he is striving to give expression. His language, if strictly interpreted as a statement of historical facts, might suggest that in his view there was no development of the higher side of man's life, even among the Jews, before the coming of Christ.

That, we know, was not his belief. But the particular way in which he draws out the contrast between Adam and Christ lends itself readily enough to such misinterpretations of his language, if it is not kept in view that Paul takes Adam as the representative of the lower side of man's life. What he is concerned with is not the particular way in which he expresses his thought, but with the great thought itself, that Christ is the starting point for a new stage in the spiritual life of humanity. But unfortunately undue concentration upon details in his particular way of expressing it has distracted attention from what is of supreme significance in this passage—his vision of a new humanity of which Christ is the Head.

It is through Christ, the second Adam, this vision has come to him. Christ is the inaugurator of the new humanity, its leader and, above all, its ever-present inspiring spirit. For that reason Paul's vision of a new humanity is no mere dream. It is solidly rooted in fact. In the historical Jesus there has emerged a new type of humanity, however great and manifold may be His links with the past history of humanity. In the Christian Society, in its ideal at least if not always in reality, there is to be seen an illustration of what the new humanity is to be. The vision of the new humanity, far from being a mere fond dream, is already being realised, is already at work in human life.

That Paul should acclaim Jesus as the inaugurator, leader and inspirer of the new humanity, is a signal proof of the extraordinary impression made upon him

by the personality of his Lord. Jesus was a countryman of his, a contemporary of his, about whose life in Palestine he had learned much from his fellow-Pharisees before he became a Christian, and afterwards from those who had been His close companions in the days of His flesh. In this Jesus he recognised a second Adam, the Head of a new humanity. What must the personality of Jesus of Nazareth have meant for Paul !

In Paul's vision of a new humanity we have what would be described in modern phraseology as his philosophy of history. "The essential feature of the philosophy of history," says one of our philosophers, "is the attempt to envisage the history of mankind as a whole, and to exhibit, so far as discernible, some plan or purpose, some 'end' of intrinsic value, seen to be increasingly realised when the sequence of events is contemplated as a whole."¹ Professor S. R. Butcher has reminded us how much the modern world owes to the Jews, in comparison with the Greeks and other ancient peoples, for the conception of a divine plan being worked out in the history of mankind. "In Greek authors of classical times there is no trace of the thought that the human race as a whole or any single people is advancing towards a divinely appointed goal."² The idea of a great purpose which God is working out with the Jewish nation, and through the Jewish nation

¹ Professor Pringle-Pattison, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. XI.

² *Some Aspects of the Greek Genius*, p. 162.

with the Gentiles, is a notable feature of the prophetic Jewish literature, and even, if on a lower level, of the apocalyptic literature. As a Jew Paul had been powerfully influenced by the inspiring tradition which he found in this Jewish philosophy of history. He carried it with him when he became a Christian, but it was transformed in his hands into something grander than had entered into the mind of the greatest of the prophets to conceive. That transformation was rooted in the new experience that had come to him through Christ. Along with his new experience of the love of God and of love as the inspiration of a truly good life there went a new philosophy of history. He no longer cherishes his old Jewish dream of God's gracious purpose with humanity being realisable only through the increasing acceptance of the Jewish law by the Gentiles. That dream of his is ended. He has learned that, if what Christ reckoned the things of supreme worth in man's religious and ethical life are given their rightful place, the barrier between Jew and Gentile is broken down, and the way is opened up for the new humanity in which there will be neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek nor barbarian, freeman nor slave, but all men will be one in Christ. It is along this line he conceives how the purpose of God with humanity is to be realised. The oneness of humanity in Christ has been the goal of God's purpose throughout the ages and in the whole family of mankind. The divine purpose has been at work in a long process of evolution. "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is

natural (merely psychical, not spiritual); then that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. 15. 46). The first Adam is succeeded by the second Adam. And for the advent of the second Adam the time was ripe in the Gentile¹ as well as in the Jewish world. "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4. 4).

There is a magnificent sweep in Paul's vision of a new humanity. For this vision he is indebted to Jesus and to His vision of the Kingdom of God, but only one who was himself a great spiritual thinker could have so interpreted the mind of Jesus about the Kingdom of God as to make it readily intelligible in the Gentile world. His vision of a new humanity has never ceased to lay its power upon many a susceptible heart. Is a fuller measure of the power of this vision not what the world sorely needs in these distracted days?

XXVII

The First-born among many Brethren

WE are familiar with dreams of a coming day when

"Man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that."

The brotherhood of humanity is a great ideal, but the worth of this ideal depends on the conception of what the individual must be, if any worthy brotherhood of

¹ "The discredit of paganism, the philosophical belief in the unity of God and in providence, the vague longings for immortality, knowledge of the human soul, fondness for inward mystical meditation, new ideas of brotherhood and moral purity, ascetic exercises, distaste for pleasure and the world, a certain need of believing and adoring, the vogue of preaching and many other tempers almost Christian seemed to call for a new faith." Martha, *Les Moralistes sous L'Empire Romain*, Preface, p. v.

humanity is to be realised. Paul is here a helpful guide.

He, too, has his dream of a brotherhood of humanity, and he leaves us in no doubt as to what the individual members of such a brotherhood must be. They are "predestinated (fore-ordained R.V.) to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8. 29). Christ is more than the inaugurator of the brotherhood of humanity, He is Himself the type of manhood needed for the brotherhood. If He is "the first-born among many brethren," each individual member as a brother of Christ is to become Christlike, or at least to be ever striving to become Christlike.

This is to strike a lofty note in laying down the indispensable condition for the realisation of the brotherhood of humanity. To be like Christ in His filial trust in His heavenly Father; to be like Christ in His faith in the infinite worth of every member of the heavenly Father's great family; to be like Christ in His estimate of what is most worth living for; to be like Christ who came not to be served but to serve; to be like Christ in His self-forgetting, self-sacrificing devotion to the well-being of His brethren; to be like Christ in the heroism with which He faced the manifold forces which were fighting against Him and the achievement of His purpose—if this is what the individual members are to be ever straining towards, the establishment of the brotherhood is no easy task. There is need of "loins girded about" and "lamps burning."

Jesus, from the beginning to the end of His ministry, cherished a great vision of the Kingdom of God, but He had little to say about the outward form the Kingdom would assume. What engrossed Him was the fashioning, in individuals, of personal character worthy of citizenship in the Kingdom. His demands upon individuals involved a quite extraordinary measure of moral heroism. What He regarded as essential for worthy citizenship in the Kingdom comes to light in sayings such as these: "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12. 15). "What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?" (Matt. 16. 26). "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5. 44, 45). "He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10. 38, 39). "If thy hand or thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee" (Matt. 18. 8).

Paul is at one with Jesus in the demand he makes upon individuals for exceptional greatness of personal character, and especially for heroic love. What, in the interests of the brotherhood of humanity, the vision of which is ever with him, he is supremely concerned about is, that both himself and those whom he addresses should have the mind which was in Christ Jesus; that they should have the spirit of Christ

dwelling in them and shaping all their ambitions and activities; that they should have the power of Christ resting upon them; that they should have fellowship with Christ in His love-inspired sufferings and sacrifices for His brethren; that they should be conformed to the likeness of "the first-born among many brethren." Here he finds the only sure foundation for the brotherhood of humanity. So throughout his epistles he has never done with his fervid appeal to his readers to strive after ever-increasing attainments in Christlike character.

Paul's emphasis upon what individuals must be, if his vision is to be realised, has its lesson for all who are haunted by dreams of a brotherhood of humanity. The acceptance of that lesson does not preclude serious consideration of the contradiction which exists between the ideal of the brotherhood of humanity and the external framework of various provinces of our modern social life. On the contrary, the more the indispensableness of worthy personal character is recognised, the keener will become the sense of that contradiction, and the more surely will there emerge in the long run reconstruction in many spheres of industrial, national and international life. But the re-adjustment of the external framework is not the chief thing. We have had many an alluring picture drawn for us of a Utopia or ideal society in which the stress has been laid upon the transformation of external social conditions, and little has been said about the transformation of the members of the society themselves. But it is in what

men are in the heart of them the crux of the problem is to be found.

“ The heart ay’s the part ay,
That maks us richt or wrang.”

The story is told of a group of idealists in Australia at the end of last century, who believed that under happier social conditions they could found and maintain an ideal industrial society. They set sail for South America and selected a promising stretch of land for the future paradise. The selfish scrambling by individuals for their individual, material interests brought the whole enterprise to ruin within a year or two. The chronicler of the collapse tells us that when these dreamers set sail for the promised land they had a stowaway on board they had neglected to take into account—human nature.

There is no short cut to ideal society by a mere revolution in external conditions. There is need of something more adequate to the hardness of the task; there is need of a revolution in the heart and will of the members of society. Such a revolution means a call for exceptional heroism : that is why it is so often kept in the background. But without moral heroism in its members the brotherhood of humanity will be but a vain dream. Believers in the brotherhood of humanity must count the cost and be ready to pay the price, if their dream is to be realised. There is no other way.

It is worth noticing that Paul makes little use of the word “ predestinate ” except in the passage where

he is speaking of the brotherhood of humanity.¹ His use of it here means that the goal of the divine purpose in the whole history of the human race, and indeed in the whole process of the travail of the created universe, is the bringing in of the brotherhood of humanity in Christ. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate (A.V.) to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8. 29). There is grandeur in this conception of the purposive love of God working from the beginning and through all things towards His final goal—the realisation of the brotherhood of humanity. In comparison with this conception of predestination how poor seems the conception which represents God as "predestinating some men and angels unto everlasting life, and fore-ordaining others to everlasting death."²

XXVIII

The Oneness of Humanity in Christ

THE oneness of humanity was a conception with which the Jews were more or less familiar. It found expression in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis and also in the prophetic literature. One and another of the prophets dreamed of a coming day when the Jewish faith would be the bond of union between the Jews and all the Gentile peoples. In the centuries immediately preceding the beginning of the Christian era the Stoic philosophers, too, had much to say about the unity of

¹ See p. 107.

² See p. III.

humanity—the *civitas communis deorum et hominum*.¹ The old narrow nationalisms had been rudely disintegrated, first by the wide conquests of Alexander the Great, and afterwards by the ever-increasing extension of the Roman Empire.² The spread of the Greek language and of Roman civilisation contributed to the growth of a sense of a community of interest between peoples of various races, nationalities and religions. Thus along several different lines the way was being prepared for the decisive emergence of the idea of the unity of humanity.

As a Jew and a Jew of the Dispersion, Paul in his early years may have been attracted by this idea through the universalism latent in his ancestral faith, through the popular teaching of the Stoics, and through his knowledge of the Roman Empire. While he was still a Pharisee, as we have already noted,³ he had evidently brooded long and earnestly over the problem of the Gentile world. And his heart went out to the Gentiles. From close contact with them he had learned the greatness of their spiritual need, of their need of a higher faith and a worthier ethical life. He knew that, in spite of all that was repellent in Gentile

¹ The Stoics spoke of humanity but had no worthy conception of "a common ethical end as a bond of a higher fellowship." Pfeleiderer, *Die vorbereitung des Christenthums in der Griechischen Philosophie*, p. 51.

² "What Rome did was practically to pulverise the old societies, reducing them to a collection of individuals, and then to hold them together by an external organisation, military and legal." E. Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, II. p. 47.

³ See p. 54.

religion and morality, many of them were stirred by wistful longings after something higher. Under the pressure of such longings no inconsiderable number attached themselves to the Jewish synagogue, some of them whole-heartedly, others more loosely. Paul could not well be blind to the fact that there was one great obstacle in the way of Gentiles who were attracted by the nobler aspects of the Jewish faith. That obstacle was the incorporation into the Jewish faith of the observance of circumcision and other specifically Jewish customs. However ardently he may have longed for unity between Jews and Gentiles through the acceptance by the latter of the whole Jewish law, we may not go far astray if we hazard the surmise that he was haunted at times by a disturbing doubt as to whether the bond of union between Jew and Gentile could be the Jewish law.

Then came the crisis in his own life. When God revealed His Son in him, he had a double-sided experience—an experience of the love of the indwelling God working in him “both to will and to work,” and an experience of love like that of Jesus as the secret of the truly good life. That experience meant the new creation in which he suddenly found himself. It meant a new ideal of the good life, a new understanding of God and a new outlook upon the world. It meant also the vision of a new bond of unity for Jew and Gentile. He himself connects this vision of a new bond of unity with his initial experience as a Christian. “It was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son in me,

that I might preach him among the Gentiles " (Gal. 1. 15, 16). He discovered there and then that the barrier between Jew and Gentile had been broken down by Christ; that the bond of their union was to be, not the Jewish law, but the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

It was in the power of that faith he did his work as an apostle of Christ to the Gentiles. The longer he carried out his mission, the stronger became his conviction that Gentiles were prepared to respond to an appeal based on the recognition of what Jesus regarded as of supreme importance. Gentiles might fight shy of the peculiarities of the Jewish law, but the more earnest-minded among them could appreciate the religious and ethical ideals of Jesus. The message about the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and about the way of love which the crucified Jesus had himself trodden, could win a response from Gentiles as well as from Jews.

It was in the spiritual possibilities latent in men as men, in their capacity for a Christlike life of fellowship with a gracious God and of loving self-sacrificing service to one another, Paul found the secret of the unity of humanity. That Christ, with all that Christ stands for, is the true bond of unity, is a conviction which comes to luminous expression in one epistle after another. "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. . . . There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 26-28). "For as the body is one, and

hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free" (1 Cor. 12. 12, 13). "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. 10. 12). "Ye have put off the old man with his doings and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge of him that created him: where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3. 10, 11).

One reason why Paul speaks so often and so fervidly about the oneness of humanity in Christ is, that for more than a dozen years he was in perpetual conflict with Judaising Christians who insisted that no one should be permitted to become a member of the Christian Society, if he was not prepared to take upon himself the yoke of the Jewish law. We can understand why they were the relentless opponents of Paul. In their estimation he was a traitor to the Jewish religion, who must be denounced and antagonised wherever his baleful work was being attended with success. They believed, as Paul did while he was still a Pharisee, that the Jewish law was the final and authoritative expression of the will of God, and that disloyalty to the law was all one with disloyalty to God. They acknowledged Jesus as Lord, but in this acknowledgment they saw no reason for slackness in their devotion to the Jewish law. Jesus,

they might have pleaded, did not say, as Paul did, that He was the end of the law, but that on the contrary He complied with many of the requirements of the law which Paul was bent on ignoring as now worthless or worse than worthless.

That was the position taken up by the Judaising Christians who embittered Paul's later years. He knew the reason of their fierce attachment to the Jewish law; he knew it from his own experience as a persecutor of the followers of Jesus. What drove him to be a persecutor was what he had learned from fellow-Pharisees in Jerusalem about Jesus and His attitude to the Jewish law. He was sure that the ideal of goodness which Jesus had set forth in His teaching and in His own life was absolutely irreconcilable with the ideal of goodness as strict obedience to the precepts of the Jewish law.¹ But when God revealed His Son in him, his old ideal of goodness was completely revolutionised. His experience of the love of God in Christ and of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus ushered him into a new world. He could not therefore but be an uncompromising antagonist of the Judaising Christians who were insisting that obedience to the Jewish law by Gentiles as well as Jews was indispensable for Christian discipleship. If their views were to prevail in the Christian Society, then, amongst other results, his hope of the oneness of humanity in Christ would be shattered. It has been often charged against Paul that in his handling of his opponents he too often allowed

¹ See p. 31.

an intolerant temper to get the better of him, and that he made use of needlessly harsh language in speaking of them. Even if that were true, let it be borne in mind that he was fighting for the essence of Christianity, for "the things of Christ," for the things for which Christ lived, and for which Christ died. And he was fighting that battle not only for his own generation but for all the subsequent generations.

XXIX *Wide Room for all Life's Higher Values*

IN his vision of the new humanity Paul sees a place for every member of the human race. Does he also see a place for every worthy human interest? It is usual to-day to speak of goodness, truth and beauty as the three chief "values." Does he make room for each of these three?

There can be no doubt that he makes room for goodness. He came of a race whose noblest representatives thought of God as, above all else, righteous will, and who insisted upon righteousness of life as what was of supreme importance for the individual and for the nation. Especially in connection with their criticism of unworthy religious views and practices does this emphasis upon righteousness find trenchant expression. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge

the fatherless, plead for the widow " (Isaiah I. 11-17). This emphasis upon righteousness is also a characteristic feature of later Judaism, however far in some directions the rabbinical ideal of righteousness may have fallen below that of the great prophets of Israel. Every Jewish synagogue was an ethical school, as well as a place of worship. The close connection in the Jewish faith between religion and morality not only impressed many earnest-minded Gentiles who came to know about the synagogue and what it stood for, but even drew some of them to identify themselves with the life of the synagogue.

As a Pharisee Paul served himself heir with the whole strength of heart and will to this noble tradition of emphasis upon righteousness. How can I become a good man? was the question which engrossed him. His experience of " the spirit of life in Christ Jesus " involved a transformation of his ideal of the good life, but it served only to intensify the emphasis he put upon goodness as the thing of supreme worth. For himself, he is ever striving to become a good man after the pattern of Jesus Christ. When he was nearing the end of his career, he says to the Philippians: " I count not myself yet to have apprehended: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus " (Phil. 3. 13). As for those whom he addresses in his letters, he is ever calling upon them to make fresh attainments in goodness,

and in the highest kind of goodness. A scholar in Christ's school, he has been continually learning to appreciate goodness wherever it is found. Whatever is said or done in the spirit of Christ makes its appeal to him. So in writing to these same Philippians, Gentiles living among Gentiles, he calls upon them to take note of whatever goodness is manifested by their non-Christian neighbours, to ponder over it and learn from it. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue (any moral excellence), and if there be any praise (anything worthy of praise), think on these things" (Phil. 4. 8). These great words of his refer primarily, of course, to what is of ethical worth, but the revelation they give us of his open-mindedness and of his large-mindedness is worth bearing in mind.

It is needless to enlarge upon the sovereign place he assigned to goodness among life's values. But was his emphasis upon goodness so one-sided that little or no room was left for other values, such as truth and beauty?

It cannot be justly said that he was indifferent to the quest for truth. Knowledge of the meaning of the world in which he found himself was one of his dominant interests. In this sense he was a philosopher, a lover of wisdom. He had evidently brooded earnestly over the problems dealt with in the "wisdom" litera-

ture of his people, especially in the Wisdom of Solomon.¹ It is probable enough that the speculations of the Stoics upon the meaning of the world had attracted him. He pressed into his service one and another turn of thought and phraseology borrowed from popular Stoical teaching. He might be impatient with the pretentious and frivolous philosophising he encountered at Corinth and elsewhere, but he was no enemy to the vocation of the true philosophical thinker. When we recall how, with his penetrating insight quickened by his Christian experience, he sets forth the thought that the ultimate reality of the created universe is the purposive love of God working from the beginning towards its goal in the bringing in of the new humanity, are we not justified in saying that Paul himself was not only a philosophical thinker, but a great philosophical thinker? And let this be specially noted, that, far from regarding the quest for truth about the meaning of the world as inimical to the interests of goodness, he takes for granted that goodness and true thinking about the meaning of the world are linked together by a community of interest.

But in these days when the interests of science (especially physical science) are in the ascendant, it may be asked whether Paul leaves due room for the quest after "scientific" truth. Science, in the narrow sense of the term, owes little to the Jews as compared with the Greeks. We need not therefore expect to find in Paul any special interest in scientific investi-

¹ See p. 137.

gation. But indirectly he does make room for it. If, as Paul teaches,¹ the universe has been created by God in Christ, and if the purposive love of God and the thought of God are everywhere and always at work in it, then to seek to find out the laws which obtain in the world of nature is to seek to know the thoughts of God embodied in it. So Kepler said of his own work as an astronomer that he was trying to "think God's thoughts after him." In that sense scientific investigation is in its own limited sphere a quest for knowledge of God.

In regard to beauty, the third of the three chief values, this may be said at the outset, that we need not expect to find in Paul an all-round man; that it is enough if he leaves room for a value in which he has less interest than in goodness and truth. As far as we can judge from his epistles, he had no special gift for the appreciation of beauty. He had ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the achievements of Greek art in painting, sculpture and architecture. These seem not to have appealed to him: their association with polytheistic religion might partly be the explanation. But even in appreciation of the beauty of the world of nature he fell below the psalmists and prophets of his own race. As has been often pointed out, no one could gather from his epistles that for long years he was in almost constant contact with some of the grandest and most beautiful things in God's world. What a contrast we have here between the disciple

¹ See Chapter XVII.

and the Master ! To Jesus things beautiful were a revelation of His Father in heaven, the primal source of all beauty.¹ " Consider the lilies of the field. . . . Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these . . . God does so clothe the grass of the field " (Matt. 6. 28-30). In this region Paul had not sat at the feet of Jesus ; he was evidently not born with the necessary faculty for appreciating this side of the personality and teaching of Jesus. To use his own language with reference to a different subject : " Each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that " (1 Cor. 7. 7). But by his conception of the purpose and thought of God being at work in the whole created universe, he at least leaves room for values which appeal to others more than to himself.²

¹ On the beauty of the world as a revelation of God there is an interesting sentence or two in the biography of the French painter, Jean François Millet : " One day as little François stood at his father's side watching the setting sun sink into the waves, the glory of the scene stirred him to enthusiastic admiration, and he poured out his heart in an ecstasy of childish rapture. Jean Louis took his cap off reverently and said : ' My son, it is God.' The boy never forgot that word." Julia Cartwright, *Life and Letters of Jean François Millet*, p. 7.

² Goodness, truth and beauty are, or ought to be, a unity. The quest for goodness is a way to God the Eternal Goodness ; the quest for truth is a way to God the Eternal Truth ; the quest for beauty is a way to God the Eternal Beauty. The interests of these three values need not conflict with each other. In God, their primal source, these several interests are conjoined in one common interest.

CHRIST is the Saviour of the individual. He is also the second Adam, the Head of the new humanity. He is the first-born in the brotherhood of man. "All ye are brethren" (Matt. 23. 8). A brotherhood demands mutual love amongst its members, love which expresses itself in mutual service. Christ the first-born is the supreme servant of the brotherhood. So He describes Himself. "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth" (Mark 22. 37). "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10. 45). And He tells His disciples that the test of greatness in the brotherhood is the measure of service. "Who-soever would become great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10. 43, 44).

Here Paul is at one with Jesus. He concentrates attention upon the religious and ethical life of the individual, but, as interpreted by him, the religious and ethical life of the individual cannot be realised, unless he goes out beyond himself and his own interests, intensely spiritual though these may be, and gives himself in loving service to his fellows. "Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbour's good" (1 Cor. 10. 24). "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Phil. 2. 4).

How Paul interprets service to humanity is suggested

by these words in the epistle to the Colossians : " Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus " (Col. 3. 17). By service to humanity Paul means service done in the name of the Lord Jesus ; in other words, in the spirit of Christ. " No man," says Professor Peabody, " can do much for others, who is not much himself." Worthy service involves sharing in the inner life of the Head of the new humanity, in His faith in a gracious God, in His faith in the infinite worth of the individual soul, in His love for His fellows. Further, service to humanity in the name of the Lord Jesus involves helping others, to happiness, indeed, but, above all, to the attainment of the things which Jesus counted of highest worth. This is never absent from Paul's thought of service to the brotherhood of man. He is ever intent upon those whom he addresses becoming conformed to the likeness of Christ. This comes out in his frequent use of the phrase, " building up." The significance of this phrase is obscured by the translation of it into " edifying." What Paul means by it is that Christians are to set themselves to build up one another in Christlike character, as in passages such as these : " Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up " (1 Cor. 8. 1) ; " Let all things be done unto building up " (1 Cor. 14. 26) ; " Seek that ye may abound unto the building up of the Church " (1 Cor. 14. 12) ; " Let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may build up one another " (Rom. 14. 19). Paul's meaning has been caught in the words of an American

philosopher: "So act as to help towards making mankind one loving brotherhood."¹

Whether we have regard to the root from which it springs or to the end at which it aims, social service may be inadequately interpreted. Such inadequacy of interpretation is suggested by the vogue of the word "altruism" in speaking of social service.² This is a poor substitute for the old fashioned word "love." It avoids calling attention to what the servants of humanity must themselves be, and to what those who are served may become, in personal character. Merely doing this or the other thing for others is a lower kind of social service than doing all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, in the spirit of Christ.

For Paul, doing all things in the name of the Lord Jesus is the ideal of social service, but his high ideal does not preclude him from cherishing a singular breadth of view in his appreciation of service to humanity. Two illustrations may be given.

In writing to the Christians at Rome he says: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. . . . Rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a

¹ Professor Josiah Royce, *Hibbert Journal*, April 1913.

² The vogue of this word is due to Auguste Comte, the founder of the "religion of humanity," whose favourite motto was "*vivre pour autrui*."

minister of God to thee for good . . . he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil . . . for this cause ye pay tribute (taxes) also; for they (the tax-collectors) are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing" (Rom. 13. 1-7). Questions may be raised whether Paul is here condemning every kind of resistance to unjust and oppressive government. But what concerns us at present is Paul's interpretation of the work of the officials of the Roman Empire. He had a wide acquaintance with the administrative work of the Empire in the many countries in which he had travelled. He had a generous appreciation of the service of Roman administrators in maintaining peace and good government. It was in the light of his own experience of what the Roman Empire stood for in the world of that day that he said: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers." What is of special interest for our present purpose is the way in which he speaks of Roman officials. They are not only servants of the Roman Empire, they are ministers of God, ordained by God to further the interests of humanity. In his view the service of humanity by Roman officials, high and low, is service to God. Even the work of tax-collectors is divine service.

Another illustration of the broad-mindedness of his interpretation of service to humanity as service to God is found in a somewhat different sphere. In appealing to the slaves who were members of the Christian community at Colossae to put a right spirit into their

daily work, he says: "Bond-servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord: whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men . . . *ye serve the Lord Christ*" (Col. 3, 22-24). Paul is often blamed for thus accepting the institution of slavery, deep-rooted in the civilisation of the Græco-Roman world, instead of coming out with a hot protest against it. But was he not going to work in the surest way for the eventual abolition of this baleful institution? If slaves and slave-owners were inspired by the spirit of Christ in their relations to one another; if they recognised that they were one in Christ, one in what was greatest in their personal life; if they sat down side by side at the communion table of the one Lord, in whom there is neither bondman nor freeman, was the axe not being laid at the root of this hoary evil? Paul's attitude to slavery, however, is not our present concern, but his interpretation of what service to God means. "*Ye serve the Lord Christ.*" The lot of a slave seems to us an outrage on the intrinsic worth of his manhood; the contempt cherished towards him by freeman seems fitted to embitter his whole life; the conditions under which he has to do his work seem to render it hard for him to put his heart into his appointed tasks. Yet it is to slaves Paul makes an appeal to work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men. And this is the ground on which he makes the appeal: "*Ye serve the Lord Christ.*" Even the

work of a slave, if done in the spirit of Christ, is service to Christ the Head of the new humanity.

If, as Paul teaches us, the ultimate goal of God's purpose with the created universe is the bringing in of a new humanity, and if Christ is the inaugurator and Head of the new humanity, it is natural that he should make little distinction between service to humanity and service to God or to Christ. Here we may have something to learn from Paul. Too often there has been a tendency to identify service to God with service to the Church (including philanthropy and other forms of "doing good"). Paul's interpretation of the work of Roman officials as service to God and of the daily work of slaves as service to Christ suggests the wider view that all work for the advancement of the interests of humanity may become true service to God.

The distinction which has been drawn between what is sacred and what is secular has been fraught with evil consequences. It has tended to dispose church people to be less careful about doing church work "in the name of the Lord Jesus," in the spirit of Christ. And it has tended to dispose those who are pursuing their ordinary avocations to be less careful to keep their eye upon the relation of their work to the common weal. Service to God depends, not upon the sphere in which it is done, but upon the spirit from which it springs. "All service ranks the same with God." Surely what we need to-day, in the interests of the brotherhood of man, is a growing conviction that all

good work in the most varied spheres of life is a contribution to the bringing in of the new humanity of which Christ is the Head, and is therefore true service to God.

XXXI

Fellow-workers with God

FOR what has God sent us into this world? That is a question which everyone asks in one fashion or another, and on the answer much depends for what he will make of his life. One answer is that this world is a place of probation. We are being tested with a view to our ultimate destiny in the world to come, and the test is centred in goodness or badness of character. This interpretation of the present life as a time of probation is well fitted to foster serious attention to the development of worthy character.

Paul does not overlook the thought of life as probation, but he has another and more inspiring interpretation of the meaning of this present life. He cannot get away from the thought that God is working out an eternal purpose of love, whose goal is the new humanity in Christ. For the realisation of this purpose God needs the co-operation of loyal servants of humanity.

“Not God himself can make man’s best
Without best men to help him.”¹

¹ George Eliot, *Stradivarius*. In this short poem on Antonio Stradivari, the famous Italian violin-maker, who lived more than two hundred years ago, George Eliot puts into his mouth words which he might have used in reply to friends who were disposed to laugh at him for aiming at nothing higher than the making of the best possible violins :

“ ’Twere purgatory here to make them ill;
And for my fame—when any master holds

So we have this great saying: "We are God's fellow-workers" (1 Cor. 3. 9, cf. 2 Cor. 6. 1).

Fellow-workers with God for the new humanity—in such a conception we have an illuminating answer to the question: For what has God sent us into this world? God is ever striving, ever struggling to realise His eternal purpose of love, but that purpose He cannot get realised without efficient helpers. Here in a very real sense God is dependent upon man. It is vain to hug the idea that, whatever may be man's shortcomings, God Almighty and All-wise will see to it that His purpose is somehow realised. As far as man shirks responsibility for his part in the joint enterprise, so far God is baffled.

The sense of man's co-operation with God in a joint enterprise is fruitful in many directions.

It draws individuals into a closer fellowship with one another. Where individuals are sharing in one common enterprise, they cannot afford to be self-centred, to stand aloof from their fellows and from loyal co-operation with them. The interests of the enterprise demand comradeship, and comradeship of a high order. As far as there is failure in comradeship, so far does the enterprise suffer. If the servants of humanity

'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
He will be glad that Stradivari lived,
Made violins, and made them of the best.
The masters only know whose work is good:
They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill,
I give them instruments to play upon,
God choosing me to help him."

realise the greatness of the end at which they are aiming, they cannot but work into each other's hands, they cannot but work as a team.

Further, the sense of co-operation with God and His fellow-workers in a joint enterprise keeps down egoism. No one can be an efficient participator in this enterprise who is more concerned with his narrow personal interests than with the larger interests of the enterprise itself. The enterprise demands self-forgetfulness, self-effacement, self-sacrifice. As Paul reminded the Philippians: "Do nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus who . . . humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2. 3-8). At the same time, comradeship in the great enterprise does not tend to lower the worth of individuality. On the contrary, it stimulates the individual to bring into the field whatever special gifts and powers he has been endowed with, and to take the initiative and shoulder responsibility as often as under the guidance of love and wisdom there is a clear call. Without the accentuation of individuality, of the worth of the vision and driving power of the individual, the enterprise would be robbed of one of its chief sources of strength.

Further, the sense of co-operation with God and His fellow-workers puts self-sacrifice in its right place. Paul calls for no self-sacrifice as an end in itself. He

is impatient with suggestions of this sort. In writing to the Colossians about certain ascetic exercises which were being commended to them by false teachers, he speaks disparagingly of these things as having "a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body" (Col. 2. 23). He has, indeed, much to say about the constant need of self-discipline and of fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, but he finds abundant opportunities for all this in service to others. Here hardships, renunciations, self-denials are multiplied for himself, and he welcomes them, not as ends in themselves, but as unavoidable accompaniments of the service he is intent upon rendering to his fellows. And experiences of such self-sacrifice are a spring of new joy. "I rejoice in my sufferings for you" (Col. 1. 24).

In one of his posthumous essays J. S. Mill speaks of man's "loftier aspirations being checked and kept down by a sense of the insignificance of human life—by the disastrous feeling of 'not worth while.'"¹ Those who are depressed by this "disastrous feeling" may find that by his conception of our being fellow-workers with God Paul is pointing them to a way of escape.² From the beginning God has been working

¹ *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 250.

² In an appreciative reference to the Manichæan theory that this world is the arena of a conflict between two rival principles, the good principle (God) and the evil principle (the Devil), J. S. Mill says: "A virtuous human being assumes on this theory the exalted character of a fellow-labourer with the Highest, a fellow combatant in the great strife." *Essays on Religion*, p. 117. A striking coincidence of phraseology with that of Paul.

out a great purpose in the created universe, whose ultimate goal is man, or, more specifically, the brotherhood of man in Christ: this is the meaning of the universe, of its long history and its sore travail. When the fulness of the time had come, a new and higher stage was reached in the working out of this purpose. Jesus Christ appeared as the second Adam, the Head of a new humanity. The meaning of the history of humanity is henceforth the struggle, shared in by God and man, to conform the children of men to the likeness of Christ and bind them into one brotherhood. In this struggle, Christ, the supreme servant of humanity, is the Leader. Loyalty to Him is loyalty to the cause of humanity. Here there is room for the service of all men, whatever be their race, and whatever be their capacities and gifts; and room for the activities of all whose work can contribute to the furtherance of one or another of the many worthy interests of human life. The call to be helpers of God in this divinely-human enterprise may well appeal to the most generous and heroic instincts. And no one who responds to the call to put himself under the leadership of so great a Leader in so great an enterprise, and throws himself into the service of humanity with what strength of heart and will he can command is likely to be much troubled with the disastrous feeling of "not worth while." He can be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as he knows that his labour is not vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15. 58).

THE question is sometimes raised whether it was the intention of Jesus to found such an institution as the Church. It is said that there are no express words of His which point in this direction. Whether that is true or not, the Christian Society was inevitably involved in His mission. He was something more than a great religious and ethical teacher; He was the Leader in the Kingdom of God. At the very beginning of His ministry He "came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1. 15); and from the beginning to the end of His ministry the vision of the Kingdom of God was His master light. The twelve disciples could not but have been aware that they were being trained by the Master to be His fellow-workers in bringing in that Kingdom of God whose interests lay so near to His own heart. After His death and resurrection it was inevitable that all who acknowledged Jesus as Leader in the Kingdom of God should be drawn into close fellowship with one another. Realising their responsibility for the interests of that Kingdom of God for which the Leader had lived and died, it was impossible for them not to seek strength and heartening for their one common task in the comradeship of the Christian Society.

Paul was here of one mind with the earliest Christians. He, too, was inspired by the vision of the Kingdom of

God. He did not often make use of the phrase "the Kingdom of God," but this was what he meant when he spoke to the Gentiles of the new humanity of which Christ was the Head. And he had his own way of expressing the conviction of the earliest Christians that the followers of Jesus were a society entrusted with the interests of the Kingdom of God.

His vision of the new humanity compelled him to think of the Christian Society in a large setting. He could not regard it as an end in itself. It was a means of realising his great, all-embracing vision of what humanity was to be through Christ its Head. Again and again he gives expression to this regnant thought. For example, in his letter to the Philippians: "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2. 9-11). No lower ideal for the Christian Society does he conceive than this, that its aim should be to seek that Christ (not the Christian Society but Christ) may become Lord over all, that the spirit of Christ may become the inspiring, transforming power in the whole life of humanity.

This ideal for the Christian Society has not always been kept in the foreground. Here we may find the root of some of its weaknesses. Two directions in which the inadequate recognition of this great ideal has

weakened the Christian Society may be singled out for notice.

The strengthening and deepening of the inner life of the individual is a prime concern of the Church. What the Church can do for the realisation of the vision of a new humanity depends upon the measure in which its individual members become conformed to the life of Christ. So there is need of private meditation and prayer; and need of common worship, that through fellowship with one another on the deepest levels of experience individuals may grow in the life of faith and hope and love. But the communion of the individual soul with God, which is fostered by private and corporate devotional exercises, is not to end with itself. There is something lacking in communion with God, if it does not carry the individual beyond his own spiritual comfort and joy. For the Christian, God is God in Christ. Communion with God in Christ means sympathy with God in the great purpose He is working out with the family of mankind through Christ; it means wide visions of what human life may become through Christ; it means renewed resolution to be fellow-workers with God in Christ, renewed dedication to that service of humanity which is service to God. Self-centredness in the religious life is out of keeping with Paul's vision of a new humanity.

In another direction the inadequate recognition of Paul's great ideal for the Christian Society has been the source of a further and more serious weakness. Too often the Church has been regarded less as a means for

realising the ideal of a new humanity in the present world than as an institution through whose offices salvation (safety) can be secured in the future world. Salvation is conceived as escape from eternal suffering and the enjoyment of eternal happiness. The Church is the divinely appointed and only agency through which salvation, so conceived, can be secured. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*—outside the Church no salvation. On the individual who would make sure of his salvation the responsibility is laid for attaching himself, and maintaining his attachment, to the Church, for accepting its beliefs and making due use of its ordinances. This conception of the Church as mainly concerned with the salvation of individuals in the other world was widely influential in the Middle Ages, but it is not without its influence to-day, even where there is scant sympathy with many of the mediæval interpretations of the Christian religion. It is, of course, true that this conception of the Church has been supplemented by other and finer conceptions, and that, even where it has not been so supplemented in any large measure, it has worked for good. But where the individual is encouraged to concentrate his attention upon his own safety in the other world, he may well fail to throw his whole strength into the great enterprise of furthering the interests of the new humanity in the present world. So by many men and women who are giving themselves whole-heartedly to the service of humanity the complaint is made that this kind of otherworldliness is hindering the Church from pulling its full strength

in the great task of lifting the life of humanity here and now nearer to the divine ideal.

For otherworldliness, so interpreted, Paul, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, cannot be held responsible.¹ Otherworldly he is, in the sense that he is engrossed with the things of eternal worth, and that he is dominated by the conviction that eternal issues hang upon what we make of the present life. Otherworldly he is not, in the sense that he is so engrossed with securing his safety in the future world as to weaken his interest in the present world. It is not in that sense he interprets salvation. He calls upon the Christians of Philippi to "work out their own salvation," and the passage (Phil. 2. 5-12) in which these words occur makes it clear that what he means by salvation is to "have the mind which was in Christ Jesus." He was never greatly preoccupied with the thought of escape from eternal suffering and the enjoyment of eternal happiness. His one urgent question was: How can I be a good man? and the power that came to him through Christ to be a good man was what he meant by salvation. Because salvation meant for him having the mind that was in Christ, it meant whole-hearted co-operation with Christ in realising the vision of the new humanity of which He is the Head. The new humanity belonged to the present world. It was inaugurated by Christ in the life He lived on this earth; it was visible and at work, so far, at least, in the brotherhood of those who acknowledged Jesus as Lord. And Christian dis-

¹ Chapter XXII.

ciplanship involved fellowship with Christ in achieving the great end for which He lived and died—the bringing of the whole life of all the children of men under the power of “the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Paul’s vision of a new humanity was not bounded by the horizon of this earthly scene; it stretched beyond time into eternity, but it did mean a great task to be done here and now to make the lordship of Jesus a reality in every sphere of human thought and activity.

XXXIII

The Vocation of the Church

PAUL’S vision of a new humanity implied an extraordinary sweep in his conception of the vocation of the Church. When he looked forward wistfully to the future, he saw the coming of a day when Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, and the peoples of every race and language, would be drawn together into the one wide brotherhood of which Christ is the first-born, and when all the thoughts, ambitions and activities of humanity would be swayed and transformed by the spirit of Christ. Nothing less than the realisation of that vision was what he conceived to be the mission which those who acknowledged Jesus as Lord were called to undertake and to carry through to its consummation.

The one grand equipment of the Church for so high a vocation Paul found in the life of its members; in that new life which had come to himself through Christ. So he says to the Philippians in the passage in which

he is exhorting them to have the mind which was in Christ Jesus : " Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life " (Phil. 2. 14-16).¹

In writing his letters Paul had ever in view that the Christ-inspired life of the members of the Christian communities was the indispensable means for the Church fulfilling its vocation. He had to deal with this and the other detail of problems which were troubling the Christian community to which he was writing. He had sometimes to use sharp words about abuses which were weakening the Christian community. He had to enter upon the discussion of various theological topics. He was forced oftener than once to speak in defence of himself and give illumining fragments of autobiography. He had to acknowledge acts of kindness done to him by a Christian community or by individuals. But no matter what might be the occasion of his having to write a letter, he was continually coming in with an impassioned appeal to his

¹ Compare the words of Jesus to His disciples : " Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but put it on the stand ; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven " (Matt. 5. 14, 15) ; and also the words in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel : " In him was life ; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness " (John 1. 4, 5).

readers to "let their manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1. 27). Has he been discussing in the earlier part of the letter to the Christians at Rome "justification by faith", he proceeds in the twelfth chapter to remind them that all this long discussion has a direct bearing upon what is their chief concern—growth in a worthy Christian life. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable (spiritual) service. And be not fashioned according to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12. 1, 2). Is he dealing in the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians with the problem how the various members of the Christian community are to have a due opportunity for the exercise of their special gifts, he breaks off the discussion by his great outburst in the thirteenth chapter in praise of the more "excellent way" of love. Is he writing to the Philippians out of a glad and thankful heart, before he brings his letter to a close he presses home this appeal: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise (anything worthy of praise), think on these things" (Phil. 4. 8). These appeals were made, of course, in the interests of the personal spiritual life of his readers, but also in the interests

of the effect which their personal spiritual life would have upon non-Christian Gentiles. He was exceedingly jealous lest this influence should be weakened by anything in their conduct which Gentiles could justly regard as unworthy. So he bids the members of the Christian community to be on their guard. "Take thought," he says to the Christians at Rome, "for things honourable in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12. 17). As he tells the Christians at Corinth he himself did: "We take thought for things honourable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men" (2 Cor. 8. 21).

The more closely we study Paul's letters, the more apparent it becomes that it was to the Christ-inspired life of the Christian Society he looked for the realisation of his vision of a new humanity. This, indeed, was how Christianity made its way in the Gentile world in the early years. For more than two centuries before Paul's day the synagogue, with its monotheistic faith and its moral earnestness, had been drawing towards itself no inconsiderable number of the more earnest-minded Gentiles.¹ But the Christian community made a wider and, ultimately, a more successful appeal to the Gentiles than the synagogue. Here there was no burden of distasteful customs imposed by the Jewish law to be reckoned with. Here there was faith in one God who was the loving Father of all men, Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian. Here there was moral earnestness with great love at the heart of

¹ See p. 19.

it. Here there were joy and peace and hope. Here there was an eager, courageous outlook upon the world and all its happenings. Here was a light in the darkness. Here was a message of life. Here was life itself. So the little Christian communities, scattered here and there in the Gentile world, were centres from which the Christ-inspired life was working to bring a new purity and strength and gladness to an ever-widening circle. Life was the begetter of life.

If Paul had a magnificent conception of the vocation of the Church, he had also a lofty conception of the means by which alone its vocation could be fulfilled. He was not indifferent to orderliness in its organisation and in its ministry, but it was the Christ-inspired life of its members he kept persistently in the foreground. Only by their own Christ-inspired life could they be worthy fellow-workers with God in carrying out His purpose to conform all His children to the likeness of Christ and bring them into the one brotherhood of humanity of which Christ is the first-born.

XXXIV

The Unity of the Church

THE members of the Christian Society acknowledge one Lord. They are committed to the fulfilment of the one task of realising the vision of a new humanity. They have one baptism by which they have been initiated into the membership of the Christian Society. They have one sacramental breaking of bread, by which they are brought into renewed fellowship with

their crucified but ever-present Lord. These are "notes" of their unity. But Paul has occasion to remind his readers, who may have been influenced by unworthy conceptions derived from Gentiles' cults, how these marks are to be interpreted in the Christian Society. He brings into the foreground the essential factor in Christian experience. "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8. 9). What Paul means by the spirit of Christ has been dealt with in two earlier chapters.¹ God, God in Christ, as the ally of man's better self, is working in his heart "both to will and to work," and what God is aiming at in this working of His, is to give man power to work out his own salvation, power to make ever increasing attainments in conformity to the mind which was in Christ Jesus. The spirit of Christ is the power of the indwelling God to make a man's life Christlike. It is the presence and working of the spirit of Christ in the heart of the individual which is essential for true membership in the Christian Society. In its absence, the acknowledgment of the one Lord, the one baptism, the one sacramental breaking of bread are robbed of their significance. It is in this ever-working, transforming power of the spirit the members of the Christian Society have their oneness with one another.

With his preoccupation with the thought of the working of the spirit of Christ in the individual as *the* distinctive mark of a Christian, it is natural that Paul

¹ Chapters VIII and XVI.

should find the true ground of the unity of the church in the unity of the spirit. So in appealing to the Christians at Corinth to strive after a fuller sense of their oneness with one another he says: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all" (1 Cor. 12. 4-6). He reminds them that, when they were baptized, they were initiated into a society whose outstanding characteristic was the presence and working of the spirit in its members. "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12. 13). He compares the Church to the human body, and from a special point of view. What makes the unity of the body is the life-giving power at work in each of its members: so the unity of the Church is secured by the life-giving power of the spirit of Christ at work in each individual Christian. "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12. 12, 13). "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (1 Cor. 12. 27).

While it is widely recognised to-day that unity of spirit, unity in what is of highest worth for every individual Christian, is of paramount importance, the suggestion is not infrequently made that for securing

the unity of the Church the unity of spirit must be supplemented by unity in one divinely appointed form of church government and in one divinely appointed form of the ministry of the Church. To such a suggestion Paul gives little countenance. He would have been jealous lest emphasis upon these external marks of unity would obscure the paramount importance of that unity of spirit which is the only true ground of the unity of the Church. He cared, of course, for orderliness in methods of Church government and in the exercise of the Church's ministry, but there is nothing in his epistles to indicate that he ever dreamed of putting unity in these things on the same level with unity in the spirit of Christ Jesus. How could the opponent of the Judaising Christians have taken up any such attitude? For long years he had been fighting against imposing upon Gentile Christians the old religious forms dear to the Jews. What sustained him in that fight was the conviction that, if his opponents succeeded in bringing round the Christian Society to their way of thinking, the interests of the Christ-inspired life as the very heart of Christianity would be fatally endangered, and that the way to Christ for many of the Gentiles would be effectually blocked. Was such a man with all his painful experience, both as a Pharisee and a Christian, of the results of dogged adherence to the external forms of Judaism likely to contemplate the magnifying of external forms in Christianity at the expense of the interests of life in the spirit of Christ? "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"

(2 Cor. 3. 17). Paul's fight for freedom from Jewish forms is not adequately appreciated, if its bearing upon problems emerging in the Christian Society is not understood.

The interests of the unity of the Church have been seriously jeopardised by the assumption, for which Paul is in no way responsible, that the apostles laid down definite rules about the government of the Church and the ministry of the Church, which were to be regarded as final and authoritative, not only for their own generation but for all subsequent generations. Whatever else may be said about such an assumption, this at any rate can safely be said, that it has not worked for the unity of the Church. For example, the appeal to the New Testament (supplemented in the Roman Church by the appeal to tradition) for the only divinely-appointed form of church government has had notoriously disastrous results. One branch of the Church has insisted upon the "divine right" of Papalism. Another branch, through at least some of its spokesmen, has insisted upon the "divine right" of episcopacy. Another branch, with waning confidence, has insisted upon the "divine right" of Presbytery. Another branch, also with waning confidence, has insisted upon the "divine right" of Congregationalism. We know, as a sorrowful historical fact, that this magnifying of the importance of methods of organisation has inflicted sore wounds upon the unity of the spirit. It has alienated Christians from one another. It has bred tempers which are flagrantly out of keeping with the

spirit of Christ. It has given to the world a pitiful picture of the Christian Society as a model for the new humanity. It has been a grievous handicap on the Church in the fulfilment of its vocation to bring the power of Christ-inspired men and women to bear upon the transformation of the whole round of the thought and activities of the human race. "By its fruits ye shall know it."

But in spite of these and similar drawbacks there has been a large measure of real unity of spirit among Christians. Those who have had experience of the spirit of Christ in their hearts and lives, and to whom that experience has been the chief thing in their religion, recognise that they are one with all who have had a similar experience, whatever may be the outward organisation to which they are attached, or even if, perchance, their attachment to any outward organisation may be but slight. This unity in the spirit will be increased in proportion as Christian people grow in their experience of the power of the spirit of Christ to conform them to His likeness; in their experience, as Paul would say, of "walking by the spirit."

This deepened sense of the unity of the spirit among Christians of different branches of the Church of Christ has given rise to various modern movements for achieving greater unity in external organisation. The value of unity in external organisation depends upon the measure in which it is the outcome of unity in the spirit. Greater unity of organisation, unaccompanied by a fuller measure of the spirit of Christ, might give

to the Church increased power in various directions, but power which might be exercised to the detriment of not a few of the worthy interests of human life. But, if accompanied by a fuller measure of the spirit of Christ, as Paul has interpreted this for us, greater unity of organisation might mean an instalment of the renaissance of Christianity.

XXXV *The Individual and the Christian Society*

THE interest of the individual Christian and that of the Christian Society are one common interest. The interdependence of the individual and the Society is what Paul throws into relief by the use he makes of the analogy of the human body. Each individual member of the body has its significance and worth from its connection with the body as a whole, and the well-being of the whole body depends upon the proper functioning of each individual member. "The body is not one member, but many. . . . God tempered the body together . . . that there should be no schism (disunion) in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12. 15-26). So the individual Christian is linked with, and dependent upon, the Christian Society, and the Christian Society is dependent for its strength and efficiency upon its individual members.

For the worthy development of his own life the

individual is not sufficient for himself. He has to draw upon the rich storehouse of the spiritual resources of the Society for the increase of his own individual store. Fellowship with his fellow-Christians is a condition of his growth in the life of faith and hope and love. By identification with the Christian Society "our separate weakness is supplemented by a participation in its strength and resources, we are borne up by the crowd, carried along by its rush. Our convictions are stronger, our purposes firmer, our feelings are keener for being consciously shared by the whole world we live in. Our courage and hope and confidence are measured by our sense of the strength of the army to which we belong, of the history of its past victories." ¹

On the other hand, if the individual has much to receive from the Christian Society, he has much to contribute to its well-being. On this Paul lays special stress. He has a strong conviction that each individual has his own special gift, and that by the full exercise of his gift he can render a service to the Society which none but himself can render. To this conviction about the responsibility resting upon each individual to make his own special contribution of service he gives repeated expression. "Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry (service), let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting: he that giveth, let

¹ George Tyrrell, *A much abused letter*, p. 82.

him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rom. 12. 6-8). "There are diversities of gifts. . . . But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal (for the well-being of the Society). For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge . . . to another gifts of healing . . . to another prophecy, etc." (1 Cor. 12. 4-10). "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then (workers of) powers, then gifts of healing, helps, governments" (1 Cor. 12. 28). For our present purpose the point of interest in these quotations is the way in which Paul takes for granted that every individual who has been initiated into the membership of the Christian Society has some gift of his own, which can be touched to finer issues by the spirit of Christ and turned to account in service to the Christian Society, and through the Christian Society to the interests of the new humanity. He makes no provision for a class of Christians who are mere hangers on, mere camp-followers. Every individual Christian is needed on the field of action, for great is the work on hand.

So Paul throws neither the interests of the individual Christian nor those of the Christian Society into the background. He keeps them both in the foreground. For it is through what the individual receives from, and contributes to, the Christian Society his own individual life is widened and enriched, and it is through the widening and enriching of the life of its individual

members the Christian Society is equipped for the fulfilment of its vocation :

“ The strength of the Wolf is the Pack, and the strength of the Pack is the Wolf.”¹

Paul's emphasis on the worth of the exercise of each individual's special gifts for the well-being of the Christian Society has not always been maintained. Too often there has been a tendency to lean heavily on the institution, and to take for granted that if the institution is equipped with the right doctrinal creed, the right religious rites, and the right forms of church government and ministry, and is served by what is supposed to be a sufficient number of zealous and competent workers, then there is reasonable ground for cherishing the hope that the mission of the Church will be more or less adequately fulfilled. But there are ever-recurring complaints of the inadequate results of the earnest and sustained work of the Church. May one contributory cause of this inadequacy be found in the inadequate provision of opportunity for each individual exercising his special gift? Within the Christian Society there may be a wealth of gifts which are not made the most of for the common good. The initiative force of the individual is not always warmly welcomed, whether it be initiativeness in forms of Christian service, or in the kind of spiritual message which Paul speaks of as prophecy. Here, of course, there is a difficulty. The encouragement of individuals

¹ Rudyard Kipling, *The Second Jungle Book*, p. 23. I have taken the liberty of transposing the two clauses.,

to make the fullest use of their gifts, be they ordinary or extraordinary, is a menace to orderliness. Individuals in the exercise of their gifts may let self-conceit blind them to what love demands from them in their bearing towards their fellow-members. The spirit of love is needed in all the members, if the interests of order and the freedom of the individual are to be rightly adjusted. But where the spirit of love is at work, nothing but good can result for the well-being of the Society, if the individual member is encouraged and helped to give the best that is within his power to the service of the common cause. When the individual is conscious that there is a place of its own for his special gift, a work of his own to do, and when he is brought into close touch with fellow-Christians who are dedicating their special gifts to the service of the same great end to which he is dedicating his own, and is thus laid hold of by the power of comradeship and brotherhood, his faith in the worth of the Christian Society will grow stronger and his devotion to its interests warmer. So through the fuller recognition of the worth of the special gifts of individuals the Christian Society will itself be strengthened. In the words of J. R. Seeley : “ A flourishing church requires a vast and complicated organisation, which should afford a place for every one who is ready to work in the service of humanity. The enthusiasm should not be suffered to die for want of the occupation best fitted to keep it alive. Those who meet within the church walls on Sunday should not meet as strangers who find themselves together in the

same lecture-hall, but as co-operators in a public work the object of which all understand and to his own department of which each man habitually applies his mind and contriving power. Thus meeting, with the *esprit de corps* strong among them, and with a clear conception of their union and their meeting, they would not desire that the exhortation of the preacher should be, what in the nature of things it seldom can be, eloquent. It might cease then to be either a despairing and over-wrought appeal to feelings which grow more callous the oftener they are thus excited to no definite purpose, or a childish discussion of some deep point in morality or divinity better left to philosophers. It might then become weighty with business, and impressive as an officer's address to his troops before a battle. For it would be addressed by a soldier to soldiers in presence of an enemy whose character they understood and in the war with whom they had given and received telling blows." ¹

XXXVI

A Creed for the Church

IN these days when the question of the revision of the doctrinal creeds of the Church is receiving increasing attention it may be worth while to consider whether Paul has any helpful suggestion to offer for our guidance.

We may be sure that any creed which would have commended itself to Paul must be wide enough to be adequate for the whole Christian Society. Membership

¹ *Ecce Homo*, Chapter XVIII.

in the Christian Society he regards as involving devotion to Christ as the Head of the new humanity, loyalty to His religious and ethical ideals, and co-operation with Christ and with one another in service to the new humanity. The Christian Society, as thus interpreted, is wide as the human race. It makes room for peoples of different race, for Gentiles as well as Jews; for peoples of different degrees of culture and civilisation, for barbarians as well as Greeks; for peoples with diverse national traditions and with diverse forms of thought. Paul is exceedingly jealous lest insistence upon what is of secondary importance should become a barrier in the way of anyone who acknowledges the lordship of Jesus finding himself at home in the Christian Society. This jealousy of his is the explanation of the passion with which he resisted the demand of Judaizing Christians that no Gentile who was not prepared to render obedience to the Jewish law should be admitted to the membership of the Christian Society.

The creed which seemed to Paul sufficient as a test of Church membership was a short one, but a creed which, with all its simplicity, cuts deep and reaches far. We have hints of this short creed in more than one of his epistles. "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12. 3). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10. 9). "God also hath highly exalted him . . . that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the

Father " (Phil. 2. 9-11). Jesus is Lord—Paul nowhere explicitly prescribes that creed for the Church, but it is in reality a succinct summary of his teaching about the nature of the Christian Society.

The creed of the earliest Christians, who were for the most part Jews, was usually expressed in different phraseology. "Jesus is the Christ" was their way of saying, "Jesus is Lord." When, in answer to the question of Jesus to His disciples at Cæsarea Philippi, "But who say ye that I am?" Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ," he was acknowledging, in phraseology natural to a Jew, the lordship of Jesus, the right of Jesus to claim to be the promised Leader in the Kingdom of God and to ask from His followers their whole-hearted allegiance. It was therefore natural that the creed of the earliest Christians should have been "Jesus is Christ" (Messiah), and it was equally natural that Paul, the apostle to the Gentile world, should have given expression to the same creed in phraseology more readily understood by the Gentiles and said: "Jesus is Lord."

It is important here to keep in view how Peter, spokesman for the Twelve, had come by his faith in Jesus as the Christ. This creed was not imposed upon the disciples by the mere external authority of Jesus; it welled up from their experience of what in the years of their close companionship they had found in Jesus. He had disappointed many of the expectations stirred in their hearts when they first became His followers. They were perplexed. He was not bearing Himself as

the Messiah they had been looking for. But in their close fellowship with Him His personality had been laying its power upon them; they were gaining a new insight into the meaning of human life, into the character of God, and into the nature of the Messianic Kingdom in which their Master was to be the Leader. They were being slowly but surely transformed in mind and heart and will, till at last their experience of what Jesus had been to them constrained them to utter the great confession: "Thou art the Christ." They had come by their creed, not through deference to any external authority, but through the working of God in their own heart. The Father in heaven had revealed it to them.

Not otherwise was it with the origin of Paul's confession of the lordship of Jesus. Through Jesus there had come to him a new experience of the love of God, a new insight into love as the ideal of the good life, a new understanding of the purpose of love which God was working out with the whole human family. Jesus was the creative centre of the revolution that had taken place in his own personal life, and he gave expression to this experience of what he had found in Jesus in his favourite creed: "Jesus is Lord." It is accordingly intelligible why, in addressing the Gentiles as an ambassador of Christ, he should have been less concerned about winning their acceptance of his creed on the ground of his apostolical authority than about fostering such an experience of the working of the spirit of Jesus in their own hearts and lives as would

inevitably issue in the confession of the lordship of Jesus. As he said to the Corinthians : " No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit " (1 Cor. 12. 3).

The question may naturally enough be asked why Paul's creed, simple but searching and comprehensive, should have come in later ages to be somewhat thrown into the background by more elaborate doctrinal creeds. That is a very large question. It will suffice for our present purpose to refer in the briefest way to one or two points.

Paul was by his natural bent a thinker, a bold speculative thinker. His Christian experience was a fresh stimulus to his exercise of thought and imagination. One subject which held his interest was the relation of Christ to the created universe and to God the Creator of the universe.¹ It is no unwarranted assumption that, like the author of the epistle to the Hebrews and the author of the Fourth Gospel at a somewhat later date, he was familiar with the Stoic idea of " Logos " (Reason) as immanent in the created universe, and with ideas, current amongst other Gentile and also Jewish philosophical thinkers, such as Philo of Alexandria, about the relation of the " Logos " to the unknowable God. From such sources he borrowed turns of thought and of phraseology to express his own mind about the relation of Christ to the universe and to God the Creator of the universe. But there is nothing in his epistles to indicate that he was minded to make

¹ See Chapter XVII.

the results of his thinking in this region part of the creed to be accepted by every member of the Christian Society. They were helpful suggestions for those who might be interested in speculative problems of this sort. He did not put them alongside the creed: Jesus is Lord. This was the creed for all the members of the Christian Society, for those who were interested in such speculative problems and for those to whom the discussion of such problems made little appeal.

In the second and third centuries the problem of Christ's relation to the universe and to God the Creator of the universe was keenly and widely canvassed by Christian thinkers. In this period it was largely amongst people who were living in the atmosphere of Hellenistic civilisation that Christianity was gaining its victories. Christian thinkers set themselves to commend the Christian faith to educated Gentiles who were familiar with various currents of philosophical thought. Some of them, like Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria, had been eager students of Greek philosophy before they became Christians, and after they became Christians they did not cease to philosophise, but to philosophise in the light of their Christian experience. They claimed that through Christ they gained a truer insight into their old philosophical problems, and, strong in this assurance, they made an appeal to educated Gentiles on behalf of Christ and the Christian faith. We can understand why in these circumstances the Christian Church of that period occupied itself so much with theological problems, even

with what might justly be regarded as philosophical speculations. To relate the Christian faith to the forms of thought characteristic of that age was to render a signal service to the cause of Christianity; and, let it be added, the Christian thinking of men like Clement and Origen has made all the subsequent Christian generations their debtors.

It has to be borne in mind, however, that we have here only one aspect of the activities of the Christian Church of that period. Christian thinkers were in close touch with the warm life of the Christian communities, increasing rapidly throughout the Roman Empire and exercising a regenerating influence upon the religious and ethical life of the Gentile world. Some of the members of the Christian Society, who were in earnest with their acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord, had little interest in, were indeed distrustful of, these complicated theological speculations. They disliked the "intellectualism" which was fostered by this emphasis on theologising. The Church itself had to protest against extreme forms of intellectualism (Gnosticism) which were threatening to depreciate in a very serious way the religious and moral values which belonged to the very essence of Christianity. At the same time the *virus* of intellectualism did not cease to have a subtle and unhappy influence within the Church. This will appear when we pass from the second and third centuries to the fourth and subsequent centuries.

At the beginning of the fourth century there was much animated discussion by theologians about the relation

of Christ to the created universe and to God, all of them handling the problem according to the thought-forms of that age, which were the thought-forms of the religious philosophy of the Greeks. That discussion led to the calling of a great Church council at Nicæa in A.D. 325. Out of that council came the Nicene creed, in its earliest form. The decisions of the Council about the relation of Christ to God, formulated in that creed, may well be regarded as embodying against the Arian conception of the relation of Christ to God a conviction of quite fundamental importance; this, namely, that for the Christian, God is *God in Christ*.

It is not here that the difficulties about the Nicene creed and some of the decisions of later councils are felt to-day, but in the uses to which the creed has been put. To three of these uses attention may be invited.

In the first place, the creed was made a test of membership in the Christian Society—with some lamentable results. Fierce were the strifes, continued for more than three centuries, between rival sections of Christians about the mysteries of the Godhead and the relation of the humanity of Christ to His divinity. It may be urged that only through such strifes, with all the un-Christ-like tempers they stirred up, could the interests of true doctrine on these subjects be safeguarded. Paul might have said to the embittered controversialists that there was a more excellent way, the way of love. The way of love was not taken. Grievous wounds were inflicted on “the body of Christ.” Christendom was so weakened by these

internecine strifes that in the seventh and eighth centuries the Cross was largely supplanted by the Crescent in countries where Christianity was in earlier centuries firmly established; in Palestine, in Syria and Asia Minor, in Egypt and Western North Africa.

In the second place, the Nicene creed was declared to be both authoritative and final. It was itself the outcome of the free and fruitful discussion carried on in the second and third centuries; it was used to foreclose free discussion in future centuries. "It is unlawful," said the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451, "to present, write, compose, devise, or teach to others, any other creed." This claim for its finality would be less questionable, if it could be taken for granted that the thought-forms which were current in the Græco-Roman world of the first Christian centuries would be familiar in every subsequent age to every people brought into contact with the Christian faith. But this is notoriously untrue. For example, the thought-forms of our own age are different from those of the Græco-Roman world in the distant past. The Christian thinkers to whom we owe the Nicene creed did their work efficiently in relating the Christian faith to the thought-forms of their own age, just because they were working in an atmosphere of freedom. Christian thinkers are to-day sometimes more hampered than helped by the "dead hand" of the past. And many earnest Christian people who do not pretend to be "thinkers" are apt to be puzzled by some of the phraseology of the Nicene creed and the Nicene

theology. They understand more or less adequately what is meant by the personality of God, but when God is spoken of as "substance," this word is more perplexing than illumining.

In the third place, assent to the theological doctrines embodied in the Nicene creed and in theological creeds derived from it has been often so magnified as to give but a secondary place to the Pauline creed: Jesus is Lord. Orthodoxy has often been regarded as a greater thing than love. The lordship of Jesus over heart and life has often been little thought of in the heat of fierce wrangling over true doctrine: the history of the Church through many centuries and in many lands furnishes the melancholy evidence. Of the undue magnifying of assent to the doctrines of the Nicene theology we have a historical monument in the Athanasian creed. "Whosoever will be saved," so this creed begins, "*before all things* it is necessary to hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except every one keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." Then follows a declaration of what the Catholic Faith is—a long list of statements about the mysteries of the Godhead and the Person of Christ, and scarcely anything else. Put this creed alongside the Pauline creed: Jesus is Lord, and we see how far the Church has here strayed from the highway to which Paul directs us.

To-day there is urgent reason why the Church should lean heavily upon the Pauline creed. Inside the Church

there are not a few men and women, warm in the acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord, who are impatient with the magnifying of the acceptance of theological doctrine over what is involved in the acceptance of the lordship of Jesus, and whose enthusiasm for the Church and its work is apt to be thereby somewhat chilled. Then, there is an increasing number of serious-minded men and women, in no effective connection with the Church or frankly outside of it, who have to be taken into consideration. Amongst these there are many who are loyal to Jesus as the Lord of their life, who are striving to give effect in their lives to the ideals of Jesus, who are giving themselves with strength of mind and heart in service to their fellows. Outside the Church they may be, but they are fellow-workers with God in carrying out His purpose to bring in that brotherhood of man of which Christ is the first-born.

Will the Christian Church have the courage to return to the Pauline creed: Jesus is Lord? There are, of course, difficulties to be overcome. A return to the Pauline creed would, it may be said, be disloyalty to the past history of the Christian Church. But what if Paul with his short creed is a more faithful interpreter of the mind of the Master than the Church has been? Again, how, it may be said, can the Church of which I am a member be held together without the help of such a definite doctrinal creed as we have been familiar with? It might be said in answer to that question that if a doctrinal creed is a unifying force for a single branch of the Church, doctrinal creeds have not been a unifying

force for the whole Church of Christ. But apart from that, is there any stronger unifying force for a single branch of the Church or for the whole Church than the confession that Jesus is Lord, with all that such a confession involves? One Lord, the one common task of transforming the life of humanity, the working of the one spirit of Christ in the hearts and lives of the members of the Christian Society—have we not there the true unifying force for the Church? Has the unity of the Church ever been so real as in those early days when its creed was expressed in Paul's words: Jesus is Lord? It may be further asked why the Church should supplant the ancient historical creeds for the sake of some new creed. But the new creed is older than the ancient historical creeds; it is as old as the New Testament. The authority of Paul is invoked on behalf of the ancient creeds and the use that is made of them. But for no ancient creed is there such explicit authority from Paul as for the creed: Jesus is Lord.

Complaint is often made from within as well as from outside the Church about the inadequacy of the fulfilment of its mission to realise the ideal of a new humanity in Christ. May not one source of its weakness be found in the too little stress that has been laid upon the Pauline creed for the Church? Were this possible source of weakness taken frankly and seriously into consideration, might there not be a renaissance of the life of the Church? Might we not witness in many of its members a strengthening of their faith in the

Church and its work? Might not the Church draw into its fellowship and service many men and women, leal-hearted in their devotion to Jesus as Lord, who are at present more or less "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel"? ¹

¹ In dealing with the question of Creeds Bishop Temple says: "I cannot hold the Creeds exempt from criticism. It is not utterly impossible that error may have crept into them; I cannot attribute to them or to the Church any such authority as to rule out such a question in principle. But the authority behind them is so immense that I must regard such questions as academic only." *Christus Veritas*, p. 162, note. There may be no "error" in the Creeds, but the pressing question is, whether the use that is made of them may not be a needless hindrance to the fulfilment of the vocation of the Church. That is more than a merely academic question.

THE END

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